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"BETTER LATE THAN NEVER," SAID DIDDY. "KEITH, THIS IS——" "A TRAITRESS!" HE EXCLAIMED.

LOVE'S CONTENT.

[A NOVELETTE.]

CHAPTER I.

"You do grieve me, dear child, to see you so different from other girls."

"But why, mother mine? Surely you do not wish to part from me—you who have no one now but your Sassie, since dear Louie is engaged?"

"That is not what I mean, love. You do not quite understand my feelings," said Lady Musgrave, gently. "You must know that I would grieve intensely to part from you, sweet child, but the old must sacrifice their feelings for the young. My life is nearly over, yours has only just commenced," this sadly.

"Do not say such a thing, mother dear. Why you look more like our sister than anything else!" said Sassie, twining her dimpled arms around her mother's neck lovingly.

"My anxiety is, that should you be left—and, forgive me, Sassie, I must speak out—you would be left alone—quite alone."

"What should I care if all the world was gone if you were not here to love me?" exclaimed Sassie, with tear-bedewed eyes. "You have been my companion, friend, father, mother, all, ever since I can remember. Oh! do not make me miserable, sweet little mother. You do not feel any pain that I know not of?"

"Dear, loving child, no," replied Lady Musgrave, reassuringly. "Cannot you see that the wealth of your loving heart must not be thrown entirely away on an old woman, although she happens to be your mother?"

"Oh, I see it all now!" said the lovely girl,

laughing, disclosing a double row of little, pearly teeth; "it's because I wouldn't accept Lord Truman. Bother him! Why I think him a complete ninny—all cuffs, collar, and white handkerchief; and to smell him—oh, dear, isn't it awful—a perfumer's is nothing to him."

"For shame, Sassie!" said her mother, trying to look reproachful, but failing entirely. "I do not think it at all fair or kind to laugh at a man who is so good and true. Whatever his little eccentricities may be he is a gentleman even in them."

"Oh! don't look so serious, you dear, little mother, or I'll—— Well, I won't say what. But you will promise not to mention his name again; it teases me immensely—upon my word it does, there!" and the wilful girl heaved a sigh of relief, as much as to say, "It's out now, and I am happy."

"Then you really mean to refuse him ultimately, Sassie?"

"Yes, most decidedly, nothing on earth will alter my determination! I consider him a dreadful goose to dream for one moment that I would alter my decision. Does he think I am a child to change my mind? He is a nasty mean fellow to come ingratiating himself in your good graces to enlist your influence and sympathy. Were I a man I'd scorn to see where I was once refused."

"Ah! that's because you have never cared for anyone sufficiently, my child. If ever you do that will make a great difference in your nature, I am sure."

"Well, that will never be, for I do not think there is a man created that I could really feel a downright admiration for."

"Not even Digby?" said Lady Musgrave, chidingly.

"Surely you do not wish me to admire my future brother-in-law?" she returned, with a provoking little pout.

"Why, pray, does he not deserve to be esteemed and liked by the family he will some day become a member of?"

"Well, mother dear, you always worst me in an argument, so I'll cry defeat. But I will make a solemn compact with you"—this in a bantering little way all her own. "When I find a really good, handsome fellow like Digby, who does not addle his brains concerning the fit or set of his collars and coats, and does you with the points of his horses, dogs, &c., I will give a verdict of quite a different kind. Until this *rara avis* arrives I must hold to my opinions, and give the prize to Digby Glendive."

It was a pretty domestic picture. The winter sun shed its cold, silvery rays dancing sprightly about the elegant room, alighting with its steely radiance on the soft, shaded spray of roses.

The elder lady was working and transforming everything, as by a fairy wand, into rich fantastic hues that an artist would have given half a lifetime to have portrayed on canvas.

Sassie leaned back listlessly in her low rocking-chair, her arms stretched behind her little amber head, the dainty frills of lace just exposing the white, soft, rounded arms; her large, clear, grey eyes with their dark fringes drooping over her rounded cheek; a chin that Michael Angelo might have hewn, a short upper lip, and deeply-curved mouth that never assumed the same expression five minutes together.

Lady Musgrave sat on stitching, a sweet smile on her gentle face, one that retained its purity of beauty, notwithstanding a look of resigned sadness which made her appear more like a saint. It was the expression of repressed sorrow lived down bravely for the sake of her two children whom she had exalted only for, since the day her young husband was brought home lifeless, his fair head bedabbled in mud, his eyes, that had never looked but with tenderness and love on his beautiful young wife, closed for ever.

From that hour Lady Musgrave's hair turned a silvery white, and it added a charm to the features, giving them an angelic sweetness that gained the appellation of "our beautiful little mother" from her two daughters.

Sassie was in a brown study, thinking what a beautiful subject this room would make, all glowing in colour, with its dark ruby and gold satin furniture, Venetian mirrors and Indian cabinets, and bowls of choice flowers, and bright, blinding fire dancing and leaping joyously in the polished steel grate, and the graceful, black velvet robed figure of the gentle lady, who sat with one small velvet foot resting negligently on a foot-stool.

"Shall I ever look like her?" sighed Sassie. "If I thought I should not I would not care to live. Why do I go searching for subjects for my brush when here is one of the loveliest in the world?"

"A penny for your thoughts, dear child," said her mother, breaking the silence.

"They are worth far more than a penny. I was thinking that you would make a nice subject for a picture."

"Really, you will make me vain, child!" said

her ladyship, smiling, and patting the fair head affectionately.

"Will you sit for me one day in this room, if I am very good?" she said, coaxingly.

"Surely, you can find a better subject, Sassie, than I could be."

"But I say I cannot! Now, promise like a dear, kind, little pet as you are," she persisted.

"If you are determined in this fancy I suppose I must grant it; but take care, little maunderer, lest you, one day, come pleading for another subject, and that one not your foolish old mother," she said, mischievously.

"What, to make a picture of?" said the saucy Sassie, laughing merrily. "I pity the man I made a picture of! If he ever set eyes on it he would be a fit member for a lunatic asylum. It would only be his ugliness and oddities that would be an incentive to immortalize him," and with a sudden jump she ran out of room, humming the old ditty, "I'll be no submissive wife, no, not I; go to bed at half-past nine, no, not I."

In a few minutes she returned ready for walking, clad in a sealskin coat and dainty little hat and muff, the soft, rich fur setting off the delicate features, and yellow braids that lay gathered in a knot beneath her small hat.

"I am off now, mother mine; mind and don't wait luncheon, because I have some good things here to feast upon," holding up her bag-muff, exultingly. "Martha would make me take them; and the days are so short, that now armed with this commissariat I can stay on till dark."

"I am sure you will catch your death of cold in that draughty place, my love," said her ladyship, anxiously. "How long will this picture take?"

"About another week, not longer. You will admire it though, when it's finished. See, it's a delicious day, and the walk will do me no end of good; besides, the Museum is delightfully warm, so you need not be under any anxiety about me."

In another minute the radiant figure was skipping downstairs, singing to herself like a young bird, careless and free, longing to be out in the fresh, frosty air, to bask in the sunshine with the hopeful elasticity of youth, health, and spirit.

On she tripped through Kensington Gardens, looking with sparkling eyes at the floating ice on the Serpentine, and feeling in her sandwich-case for some of her goodies to feast the swans that swarmed around her, arching their graceful necks coaxingly and trustfully.

She lingered among them, first feeding one, then another, till her stock was well nigh gone.

Looking ruefully at her case, which she had been dipping in unconsciously, she said,—

"No, no, you greedy pets, you have had your share, so adieu till to-morrow; I must away."

Many admiring eyes watched the graceful figure as she walked along briskly towards the South Kensington Museum, her destination.

"Here I am at last," she murmured, "and there is a capital light, if it will but hold out long enough."

CHAPTER II.

SASSIE was seated before the fine work of art she was copying, lost in her occupation, her lips parted with pleasurable excitement, as palette in hand, she worked on, the sun glinting upon the little braided amber head, and the rosy-tipped fingers that fluttered here and there among her brushes, selecting colours, and dressing her palette.

She sat on in happy unconsciousness, her clear, grey eyes intently fixed on her easel, perfectly absorbed in her art.

Little dreamt she that a gentleman was looking earnestly at the graceful figure with eyes that were transfixed with admiration! His was the rapt gaze of a true artist, and he had come with the same object as Sassie, to study.

But his sketch-book lay unopened; the young painter had found one of Heaven's greatest creations to study from instead of man's.

Yet it was only a fair girl, with large pensive eyes, a rosebud mouth, dewy and sweet as a spring morning, that caused him to forget his errand, and to send a thrill of unknown ecstasy to course through his veins that he had never experienced before.

She still sat on, and the evening light, cold and grey, slanted through the doors, making the gallery look weird and shadowy, and the silent watcher still stole covert glances at Sassie, who now commenced putting up her things in preparation for leaving just as the magic wand of light and brilliancy turned the place into a palace of varied hues.

"How lovely she is!" he said to himself, "the ideal of my dreams. I would give all I possess to make a picture of her, one to live with me for ever."

He was a tall, but slightly built man, with the dreamy face of a poetical nature—dark, deep-set eyes, that flashed only when aroused by the fire of admiration for his favourite pursuits—painting and poetry.

"Dear me, mamma and Louie will be waiting tea," she thought, drawing on her gloves hurriedly, and hastening down the broad stair-case. "How cold it is, too!"—this as she tucked her little gloved hands cosily into her muff.

While Sassie had been in the Museum one of those strange freaks of the atmosphere had taken place; a smart shower of sleet had saturated the pavements, followed by a sharp, cutting frost, rendering the streets highly dangerous to pedestrians.

She tripped along in blissful ignorance of her danger, wondering if Lady Musgrave had sent the brougham, when lo! she slipped down the glassy steps, and would have hurt herself severely but for the timely aid of her unknown worshipper.

"Oh, thank you very much," she said, as he caught her supple form around the waist in a moment when she had lost her balance.

"Are you hurt?" he asked anxiously.

"Oh, no, you saved me just in time," she replied gratefully, as she disengaged herself from his protecting arms, and tried to look into the face of this man who had come to her rescue in her need, and whose voice seemed so sweet and musical.

Before he had time to reply a brougham came through the misty darkness, and his lovely dream-face girl added,—

"Believe me, I am very, very grateful, but I am all safe now. Good bye!" this as she put her little hand into his; and she was being whirled away as he stood, dazed—bewitched, some would say—hat in hand, perfectly oblivious of the pitiless cold and sleet that was beating on his uncovered head.

"How handsome he was!" murmured Sassie, as she sat muffled up cosily, her feet perched on the foot-warmer that her mother had thoughtfully placed in the carriage. "He saved me from a nasty fall. I wonder where he sprang from! I never saw a sign of a man on the staircase! I wonder if he was in the gallery. Heigho! what is the use of perplexing one's brains"—this with a little yawn. "He certainly came in the nick of time, that ought to be sufficient."

But somehow she could not dismiss the subject from her thoughts; they would stray away from ordinary topics to the noble-looking cavalier with the deep, musical voice and piercing eyes that even the dim afternoon could not shroud from her curious furtive glance as he held her in his protecting clasp.

"Quite a little romance," she said, softly. "I would like to see him again; perhaps he will be there to-morrow. If he is I will thank him for his timely assistance—that would only be right. Why even mamma would not object to that, though he is a stranger!" She seemed to fancy some apology was necessary for her truant fancies.

Keith Glendive strolled along the Brompton-road in a kind of blissful trance, the hand Sassie had taken in hers still tingled with a warm, sweet glow.

Little cared he for the biting north-east wind

that blew, cutting and raw, around the corners of roads and streets. He seemed treading on air, and the frosty breeze only braced him up like a restorative.

At last he found himself at Hyde Park Corner, and it flashed across his brain that he was in one of the busiest, though still fashionable quarters of town, and that he had some distance yet before he reached his rooms.

"Hillo! old man, what ails you to-night!" said his friend, the dashing young guardsman, who was seated at the blazing fire, feet on the bare, his body rocking to and fro in one of Keith's most comfortable chairs, a fragrant cigar in his girlish mouth.

"Oh, nothing in particular; a fit of the blues, attributable to the bitter weather. Glass down four degrees below freezing is not quite a charming kind of feeling."

"No, you are right there. How is the picture progressing, old fellow? Done much lately?"

"No," grumbled Keith; "there, the truth will out. The fact is, I—I—hang it, I can't tell you!"

"Then it's something awfully awful!" said young Egerton Tyrie, opening his violet eyes wide in anxious curiosity, adding, "I hope, Keith, old fellow, you haven't been led into anything that will make you sorry in the future—gambling at the club? I know they play deucedly high at yours."

"Set your mind at ease, Egerton," he said, laughing at the long face his friend pulled. "It's only a pair of grey eyes belonging to the sweetest, fairest girl in the world that has set me thinking."

"Oh! is that all?" replied Tyrie, as he gave vent to a prolonged whistle. "Why, that is but a natural state of things. But, first of all, tell a fellow who she is, where you met her, &c., &c."

"Who she is I cannot say," he said, dolefully. "That she is a lady I could bet my halldame on; she is perfectly divine!"

"Oh! draw it mild, Keith, or I shall believe you are love-mad," said the mischievous guardsman, smiling. "Don't you know every fellow says that when the fever has first laid hold of him? What I asked you was where did you see this glorious divinity?"

"Where! why, at the Museum!" said Keith, loweringly, "painting a picture."

"Oh, I see. Don't get ruffled, old man," returned Egerton, soothingly. "I see it's all right, and beg your pardon, but you know some of the sweet angels that pierce our hearts are not always artists at the Museum, hence my perhaps doubts of this one in particular. Pray go on; I am all attention, believe me."

"She sat on for nearly three hours at her task, while I looked on furtively, leaving my own work untouched. She is experienced, too, in art."

"Do you mean to tell me that you sat looking on all that time?" asked his companion, incredulously.

"Of course I did; she was a far more beautiful study than anything in the gallery—the sweetest of faces, gentle and refined, the most bewitching little mouth you ever saw, and a golden braided head that surpasses even Clytie, your ideal of loveliness."

As he described the girl's beauty his features became radiant with the theme—his eyes glowed with love's fires, conjured by the magic of his own thoughts, and impressed his friend by the force of his vivid description.

"She must, indeed, be beautiful, Keith," said his friend, as he sipped his mulled claret; "but why didn't you follow her and find out where she lived?"

"That is what worries me. She slipped down as she was leaving the building. I saved her from a nasty fall, and before a word was scarcely passed a carriage dashed up, and the coachman jumped down, opened the door, and she was gone."

"But didn't she thank you for the service you had rendered her?"

"Oh, yes; she put her hand in mine, and told me how grateful she was, and bid me

good-bye. There, now, you know all that passed."

"Well, all I can say, old fellow, is, that it is a pretty little adventure, quite a romance, and the only thing to be done is to visit the Museum again, when, of course, you will meet your fair unknown."

"But that is what is worrying me. I must go for six months' tour in Rome, at the end of which I have to return to be present at my brother's wedding."

"Ah! that slipped my mind. That is deucedly awkward; but you don't go for nearly a week."

"No; but I have to attend to so many things for the pater, you know. He is coming to town to-morrow."

"I'm sorry for you, Keith, for it seems that you and she will never meet again; but such being the case, take my advice—don't brood over it. You may depend upon it fate has never intended that you two should; so take my advice, banish her from your thoughts, and come out with me, and take a look into the Gaiety—there is sure to be some fun there to drive away dull care. We will have a bit of dinner at the club first, a cup of coffee, and leave thought behind."

In a very short time the two young men were bowling down Piccadilly into Pall Mall as fast as a hansom could go on the glassy roads.

The next day Sassie set out for her usual afternoon's amusement, and this time she did not linger to feed the swans. She hurried by, simply casting a glance at their beseeching attitudes as they arched their graceful necks and sent forth sundry shrill quacks as they watched their pretty almoner pass along, perfectly oblivious of their disappointment.

"He is sure to be there, I should think," she thought, as a crimson tide suffused her face. "Dear me!" this as she looked at her little jewelled watch, "it is now half-past two; there will be very little light left."

Was it the light that troubled her maiden heart? It must be confessed that a tall, manly figure, young and lissome, yet strong, had something to do with her anxiety to reach her destination more than her picture.

She looked about as she entered the gallery to catch a glimpse of this man, whose voice and smile was as tender and gentle as a woman's.

But no sign was there of his presence, and with a little sigh she collected her materials and commenced her work, but not with the same energy she had been accustomed to feel before.

"Dear, oh, dear! how tiresome everything is to-day," she said, pettishly, as her brushes tumbled from her fingers. "The light, too, is wretched. I shall not stay here much longer. I know I shall only spoil my good efforts."

And a grave, sad light came into the soft grey eyes, that changed like the lights and shades of an April sky. Hers was but a child's nature; she was quickly impressed with joy or sorrow, and the sunlight faded from her beautiful face as she gave one last, long look around the chamber.

She had buoyed up her mind with the sweet thought of meeting this stranger again, to hear his voice, to look up into the poetical face, and express her thanks once more.

"He does not care to come," she thought, sadly. "He has forgotten it all by now, nasty stupid creature that I am"—this as a pearly tear dropped on her picture—"I dare say he is a very disagreeable young man when he is at home, after all." And then she smiled, as she had to wipe very carefully the little tear from—as if fate willed it—the eye of the girl she was painting. "Only fancy that falling on her eyelid; it looked just as if my sweet princess were crying."

There was nothing to do now but to pack up and go; and slowly and reluctantly she finished her arrangements, buttoned her gloves, and made her way again out, casting furtive peeps over her shoulder in faint hope of seeing her cavalier of the previous day.

But, alas! he never appeared, and she had to

make her way home in anything but a happy frame of mind, for she had permitted her thoughts to wander away all the preceding night, and had weaved a delightful little romance, where he was the principal figure and actor.

On her way home the reflection that she should see him no more brought the tears to her bonnie eyes. All time seemed so blank and drear.

What should she do to-morrow and the next day, and the next! How destitute of hope her life! She could paint her picture, and perhaps finish it, but it all seemed very cold and desolate.

"Stupid little goose!" she said to herself. "What mamma or Louie would say I don't know! They must never guess my folly; but I did fancy that he looked with more than a stranger's interest. Well—well! it only shows how dense we girls are."

It was a glorious morning, though Jack Frost had spread a dazzling carpet of white flakes, soft and feathery, in the shaded nooks and hollows in the Park, where tramping feet, passing carriages, and equestrians did not sully its purity.

The Park was well attended this exhilarating morning by pretty girls wrapped in robes and furs of all descriptions, buxom matrons comfortably encoined in their luxurious carriages, wrapped in velvets and costly furs; men, the very flower of the aristocracy, either riding or walking briskly, just stopping a second to recognise a friend, here and there facing the winter breeze, and being rewarded by a delightful, healthful tingling in the cheeks that brings a spirit of wholesome defiance of the elements.

There were but a few fair equestrians, but Sassie was there on her favourite "Peggy," and cantered along as fresh and sweet as the violets she wore at her throat that lay coyly hiding their heads below her snowy collar.

"That is she!" said Keith Glendive, excitedly, as he made his way to the railings, just in time to see the graceful figure fit away like a sunbeam on a cloudy day.

He stood gazing spellbound as she rode away, her habit flowing behind her, a young groom following at a distance.

"She will return, surely," he thought. And he was right, for in about ten minutes she came dashing along this time, and Keith's experienced eye saw that she had lost for the moment the control of her horse by the white, set face and tight rein she held with such tenacity.

On she came, the horse plunging and swerving, with dilated nostrils, ears erect, as if it had been frightened.

Sassie sat immovable, with lips tightly compressed, determined to curb the animal, being a fearless horsewoman, and at last resorted to the use of the spur.

The last resource seemed to madden Peggy, and she reared up suddenly, and in another moment Sassie was unseated, her fair head dangling on the soft earth, one foot still in the stirrup, while the vicious creature was dragging her sweet young mistress in its wild career swiftly to eternity, while the bystanders stood as if paralyzed for a brief minute.

But Keith, though numbed with horror for the second, rushed through the crowd, and with the fleetness of a roe gained the race and seized the bridle with a grip of iron, at the same time disengaging Sassie's foot, by which time other assistance had arrived.

Again she was in the protecting arms of Keith Glendive, saved from deadly peril, the bare thought of which made her tremble as she lay with her golden hair dishevelled, just as it had fallen from her comb, that dreadful moment of horror when life seemed slipping away into impenetrable darkness.

Her blue-veined lids quivered, and her lips tried to frame some reply to his entreaty as he whispered,—

"Tell me, are you hurt? I beseech you to answer me."

"No," she said, with quivering lips, "only shaken—frightened, believe me."

By this time they were surrounded by a crowd of curiosity-mongers; and her groom came bustling up, looking terribly alarmed.

"Go and fetch a cab," said Keith, authorita-

tively, to the poor fellow, whose teeth chattered like castanets, for he feared he would get blamed by Lady Musgrave for not looking more carefully after his beautiful young mistress.

"I am better now, thank you," said Sassie, bravely, as she realized the unpleasant position, environed round with a motley group of gaping sight-seers; "indeed I am," she continued. "See, I can stand by myself," and she disengaged herself from his support to assure him.

"Let me pass, I know the lady," said a gentleman, making his way to the girl's side, and putting his arm around her waist and lifting her like a child across to a carriage, followed by Keith and the groom.

"I am so grateful to you, but I cannot express all I mean," she said, tremulously, as she raised her pretty eyes wistfully into Keith's face.

"I am rewarded amply by seeing you are not injured," he replied, as he helped her friend, Lord Truman, to lift her into the carriage.

"Drive as fast as you can back," said his lordship to his coachman, impatiently, not looking too pleased at Sassie's evident interest in this handsome man, who stood riveted to the spot, his fine eyes bent with a gleaming expression of admiration, love, and tender concern upon the fair girl.

"I am very sorry to remind you that delay might prove dangerous to my friend, sir, therefore excuse me saying more," said Lord Truman, abruptly.

"Thank you once more," as she waved her little hand in farewell, and sank back exhausted on the cushions.

"Gone again, my beautiful one, without leaving a trace to aid me in finding you! Will it ever be so? Are we only to meet when danger threatens you?" he murmured, as he walked listlessly in the direction of Albert Gate, immersed in a sweet reverie.

"Is it fate, kiemet, or what, that has sent me to her rescue twice? Shall we meet the third time? Bah! that is impossible. I start to-morrow for home. What a lunatic I was not to follow the groom and question him! He would have told me the name and home of my sweet stranger. I wonder what that supercilious individual was to her! How deucedly uncivil he was to me! Surely, but there," and his eyes flashed resentfully, "he can be nothing to her—perish the thought. It would drive me mad to think even of anything so horrible. But why should I care! The sea will soon divide us, and then all will be a blank—hopeless, aimless, and eternal darkness. No, there is a ray of light left to my life yet. I will never rest night or day till I have finished my beautiful one's picture. No earthly creature can deny me that happiness. She will live with me as long as I exist, my treasure. No woman, however fair, shall erase my ideal from my heart. Here is my comfort and soul's future joy—my own—my love for ever and ever."

Sassie soon regained her strength and spirits, making light of her accident, and even took Peggy's part, saying to Lady Musgrave, cheerily, as they talked the matter over,—

"Really, mother mine, poor Peggy was not to blame so very much. It was all through a nasty, mischievous butcher-boy who ran before her shouting madly."

"But Lord Truman said some young man was holding you in an insensible condition in his arms when he came to your rescue."

"I don't know what he calls coming to my rescue," she said, quickly. "I should have been dead but for that brave gentleman. Lord Truman came when the danger was over."

"Really, dear child, that is rather ungrateful of you to speak of his care and anxiety so coldly," returned her mother, with a little sigh.

"He did not save my life, mother dear. My gratitude is for the brave man that did," she said, hotly.

"But, my dear, poor Lord Truman did all that lay in his power at least, and the other showed, you must admit, very little interest in you whom he did so great a service in not making himself known, so that I might have thanked him and shown my everlasting gratitude to one who had rendered me the priceless boon of my loved child's life," Lady Musgrave replied, chidingly.

"Mamma is right," Sassie thought. "He has twice saved me from danger, but only as he would anyone whom he saw placed in the same circumstances. If it were not so, why has he never sought me in the place where he met me first?" but she said aloud,—

"I am very tired, mother, and do not feel quite strong, but, believe me, when I tell you I should either be maimed for life or lifeless had it not been for the courage and presence of mind of this nameless but noble man."

Inwardly Sassie wished Lord Truman at the Antipodes rather than have come on the scene as he did that day.

"How dared he show such an air of proprietorship, and take me away from the man who had risked his life," she thought, angrily, as she sat impassively in her chamber, while her maid unrobed her for the night.

But as she put her little weary head on her dainty-frilled pillow, and drew the rosy, silk-down coverlet up to her snowy throat, sweet thoughts chased away the darkness, for something told her this demi-god whom she had set up as an idol in her innocent maiden heart would meet her again and yet again, and her pure soul took flight in bright and happy dreams of bliss.

"Sleep on, sweet maid, nor sigh to break
The spell that binds thy brain,
Nor struggle from thy trance, to wake
To life's impending pain;
Who wakes to love, awake, but knows
Love is a dream without repose."

CHAPTER III.

"Yes, dear child, it is inevitable, so Doctor Norman says. These east winds are quite too dreadful."

"Are you sure you are not keeping anything back, mother?" said Sassie, anxiously. "Shall I summon Louie back from Paris to go with us?"

"Certainly not, love. There is no reason why her enjoyment should be curtailed. I assure you there is nothing serious, simply one lung a little weak, which a warm climate for a month or two will put straight; and a change will do you good, too, for you have lost not only your roses, but your spirits. You certainly are not so bright and gay as you were. I fear that fall from Peggy shook you more than you have confessed."

Sassie averted her face from the earnest eyes that were trying to probe the truth from her mobile, expressive countenance, that had been as easy to read as an open book hitherto.

"Indeed, I am as well and hearty as—what shall I say, mother mine—well, a milkmaid," she said gaily; but commented thus as she sat in the cosy morning room opposite her affectionate mother,—

"How thoroughly ungrateful and wicked I must be to regret dear mother's illness principally because it will take me away from him! Why cannot I thrust all such thoughts and memories from my foolish heart as unworthy, nay sinful!"

And she clasped her little hands in silent prayer, as she noted the extreme delicacy of Lady Musgrave's gentle face, and murmured,—

"Oh, my Father, who has been to me my strength and guide ever since I lost my earthly one, teach me submission, and concentrate my love and obedience to my darling mother. Make me less thoughtful of this stranger, and more dutiful to her who needs my every care and affection!"

And, as if in answer to her supplication, a still small voice seemed to ring in her ear,—

"Be of good faith. Do thy duty. Cast off the fetters of self-struggle out of your absorbing fancies, which are enslaving you, body and soul, and be free. Devote your energies to the sacrificing mother, who now requires all your heart's affections."

Comfort and peace sustained her now that she was resolved to put aside the past and live for the future.

"Is this not lovely, Sassie?" exclaimed Lady

Musgrave as they drove past the grand hills of Var in the rumbling vehicles used in Italy by travellers.

It was rather difficult for Sassie or her mother to hear each other speak, what with the perpetual jingling of the harness bells, the rumbling noise of the heavy wheels coupled with the driver's shouting, calling, whistling, shrieking, singing, with the vain idea of coaxing his cattle.

But the fair travellers were not daunted at this primitive style of locomotion, they being too interested in the glorious, glowing sunset that was tipping the hills with hues of lilac and richest purple.

"It is grand, mother," replied Sassie, with awe. "We are nearing Nice now. See! Why here are orange trees positively laden with fruit, and real roses. This is indeed a paradise!"

"Yes, it is lovely, child," assented her mother. "A perfect fairyland. I feel better already, and you have almost recovered your usual gaiety."

Certainly the scene was lovely in the extreme that greeted the delighted eyes of the pair who had come straight from dull, bleak England and its bitter keen east winds.

Nice lay before them, its hills and peaks clothed with olive and cypress, its dazzling white houses dotted here and there, and the violet blue Mediterranean stretched calmly at their feet.

Sassie felt its calm, placid beauty. Her artist soul was enraptured at the grandness of the whole classical landscape; and her impulsive heart throbbed with innocent joy as she murmured,—

"Forgetfulness will sure to come to me in this paradise, where there is so much compensation and loveliness."

And yet she heaved a little sigh as she thought how perfect would her happiness have been had he been there to share it—her brave deliverer.

Days passed now with Sassie in one whirl of pleasurable surprises and excitement; everything was so novel and fresh, and she passed in and out of the swarthy groups of peasants and picturesque ragged beggars, sometimes dropping into their grimy hands money, and receiving in exchange a volley of blessings enough to have wafted a big sinner to Heaven had they been really sincere.

Sassie had found comfort at last. Her eyes had regained their old sweet, mischievous expression, and her mouth was constantly wreathed in smiles, showing the bewitching dimples to perfection.

The beautiful dazzling South had worked wonders for both Sassie and her mother, and she felt protecting, almost Divine, love steal into her young heart, for this fragile dear one, like healing dew, and it strengthened and purified her whole nature.

"I beg your pardon, you are the lady that—" said a deep thrilling voice, which caused Sassie to reel and catch hold of a rail for support, for one brief moment; the next her hand was clasping his as she said, while burning blushes stole over her face and brow, crimsoning even the tiny shell ears,—

"You saved me, two months ago from a dreadful fate, one that makes me shudder to think of, for it might have been worse than death."

He retained the little hand, and gazed long and earnestly on the face that had haunted his dreams by night, and forced its rare beauties upon him to the exclusion of everything, human and divine, by day.

"I should have been a savage, a criminal if I had not dared for more than that; but do not dwell on the most torturing moment of my life. Let me tell you how happy I am to meet you again," he said, fervently drinking in, with all a lover's delight her timid grace as she stood trembling with ecstasies emotion and unstudied grace—a veritable Galatea before Pygmalion, her sculptor, awakened to life by the magic wand of love by her master; for it was dawning on her slowly, but surely, that existence would be valueless and desolate if this stately demi-god, who was looking down with eyes that literally blazed

with a lurid fire that thrilled through her veins, and make her stand meekly as a captive, with shy, downcast eyes, that dared not meet his earnest gaze, should their lives not be linked together by love's golden chains.

"But would you have perilled your life for anyone?" she said, naively. "I mean any damsel in distress!"

"Yes, I must plead guilty to that count," he replied, laughing gaily. "It would never occur to me there was danger when a lady's life hung in the balance. Fear and I are strangers; I never remember the feeling."

"Why, you are like Lord Nelson," she said softly, "who was lost in the woods when a little child, and was asked by his grandma if he did not feel frightened, and replied, 'what is fear!'"

"You admire our brave naval hero," he returned; "but I fall far short of that illustrious sailor. I'm afraid."

"Not so, I think you very brave," she said, with sweet maidenly confusion, "indeed I do."

"You are an angel," he whispered softly, as he pressed her little gloved hand to his lips, gallantly, which brought a very crimson tide to her face and neck, even to her ears.

What a veritable paradise this picture gallery was now to Sassie as she strolled by her hero's side, drinking in his every word, and treasuring, like a miser would his gold, each passionate gesture and expression.

Fortunately there were but two or three students busily engaged with their art, so the young couple were free to converse, and they certainly made great use of their time.

The finest specimens of the great painters were discussed and admired in turn, and Sassie had now lost all her shyness, and chatted and laughed joyously as Glendive recounted several amusing adventures, as if they had known each other for years.

"Have you finished the picture you were engaged upon at South Kensington?" he asked.

"Yes," she faltered, looking fairly puzzled.

"But how did you know I was painting a picture?"

"Ah, I see you little guessed that I was admiring the sweet artist in my corner by Land-seer's picture of the 'Chief Mourner,' or that I followed you downstairs that frosty night, and—"

"Saved me from a nasty tumble. In fact, played the part of the good fairy," she added. "But what took you to the Museum?" this she inquired.

"The same errand as yourself," he replied, enjoying her perplexity.

"Then you are a painter too, and were, perhaps, laughing at my poor attempts. Oh, it's quite too bad of you," she replied, looking so comically rueful that he burst out into a bright musical laugh, which infected Sassie as well, and the grand old galleries caught its joyousness, and the echoes awoke the stillness, causing the busy students to look round with amazement at the tall, graceful English girl and her handsome companion with interest and curiosity.

"They are a picture in themselves, the bonniest couple I ever saw; engaged lovers, I suppose," muttered an old gentleman who had been wandering about. "They do my eyes more good than the pictures. Ah, me! youth is the time for happiness and bliss."

"You have not answered my question," he said.

"About my stupid daub! Well, it is finished; but there, do not think about it, for I am quite ashamed of my work when I look round these walls and see these grand conceptions of the great masters of old."

"But these all had a beginning," he said, "as is proved by their earliest works, which were very crude, much more so than that one you were painting."

"Did you it see sufficiently to judge its merits! Oh dear! oh dear! if I had but known you were criticising my poor picture I should have—"

"Simply given me permission to take a nearer view, and perhaps asked my opinion as a brother artist, and probably my assistance;" this with

a merry twinkle in his eyes. "Shall I give my opinion now?"

"Yes, please, if you think it worth a second thought," she replied.

"You will promise me not to feel hurt, then, if I comply?"

"Yes, I promise," she said, archly.

"Well, then, I will commence. You painted your lights on a cloudy morning to begin with, and your shades were a little too pronounced, yet there was much genius and even power in the picture that tells me you have the true poet's soul, which will burst forth as you go on steadily up the hill working diligently, always remembering that to attain your goal that constant practice makes perfect. Have I discouraged you?" this with a smile as tender as a woman's.

"No, I am grateful," she replied, looking trustfully up into his fine expressive eyes. "I like your censure as well as your praise; it is that which makes the praise valuable, and I shall treasure your advice and try to do better. Will you show me some of your pictures? I should so much like to see them."

"You shall be gratified if you will come to my studio any morning before the end of the week."

"Why must it be before the end of the week?" this with a little quiver in her voice, as something told her he was about to leave Italy.

"Because I have to return to Rome to finish a work that is intended for a wedding present, and must be ready by May."

"Is it for your marriage?" she asked, tremulously.

"No, oh! no. It is a surprise for my brother's bride that is to be."

A little sigh of relief escaped her, as they now turned to leave the building.

"When shall I come? Would to-morrow suit you?"

"To-morrow—every day in the week," he replied, earnestly, "is yours. I will wait and watch, oh, so anxiously, for your coming! Your sweet presence will lighten the poor painter's den and convert it into an Eden."

How precious were his loving words to Sassie—words that pierced her fresh young heart with love's sweet ecstatic fire.

All the romance of her nature was aroused by his soft, pleading eyes and fascinating manner, that told her as plain as language itself that he loved her, and had done so from the moment he saw her—that dull, grey winter afternoon, with the deepening shadows of twilight slanting upon the little burnished head, making her eyes to dance with a strange but dazzling sparkle, lighting up her whole face as if by magic.

"How beautiful she is!" he thought, as he gazed upon her radiant face. "A very Hebe! Will the day ever come when I can claim this lovely child of my dreams—my twin soul, my divinity!"

They had now reached a handsome building, where he stopped, saying—

"This is where I am staying. I will meet you anywhere you name, and conduct you to this place, only tell me what hour I may expect you."

"To-morrow at the same time and place as you met me to-day," she said.

"Until then good-bye," he replied, as he took the trembling little hand in his brown palm and grasped it fervently, passionately; and as she turned away she only saw his grave, honest eyes looking sad and wistful at their parting, and she wished she could have comforted him in some way, and she felt he was following her with those soul-speaking eyes, and a longing possessed her to turn round and see him once more.

But she walked on bravely, past the little dirty children who would persist in begging for halfpence, bobbing and curtsying like little mandarins, and they were more than successful; for Sassie was so happy that in her blissful mood she emptied her purse among the little creatures, making them shriek with delight as they clamoured about her, and fought and struggled to obtain the largest share of the coins.

CHAPTER IV.

"WHAT a beautiful world this is!" murmured Sassie, as she jumped out of bed and threw open the casement to enjoy the fresh March breeze, and bright sunshine that was as warm and glowing as an English June.

The sky was cloudless, the sea-like sapphires sparkling and dancing in the morning glory; the outside world were up and about in their pretty, picturesque garbs, giving a touch of gaiety and brilliance that the sober-dressed English people lack so much in our dull, prosaic climate.

"Well, I never! Fancy you being up at this time, Miss Sassie!" said the astonished maid, who entered with a cup of chocolate and dry toast. "Something's going to happen, I feel sure."

"What a foolish old goose you are!" replied Sassie, as she began to tuck her rosy feet into a pair of blue velvet slippers. "Can't a body get up a minute or two earlier without a catastrophe?"

"Lor' bless you, dear Miss Sassie, it was only my fun; why it does my eyes good to see you bright and merry again, like you used to be before your fall from that dratted horse. It's a blessing my lady came to this lovely, sunny place, for it's done real wonders with both of you, that it has."

"Well, and how about yourself, Hester?" Sassie said, laughing in her old joyous manner.

"Why, I do affirm that you have got three inches stouter round the waist; and as for your dear, old face, it is getting like a pumpkin. There, now, I've had my revenge," this as she placed herself under Hester's deft hands to be dressed for breakfast.

"Dear child, how radiant you look!" said Lady Musgrave, as she gave Sassie her morning kiss. "This delightful place has acted like magic. It makes me so happy, because I was very anxious about you."

"And fretted yourself ill, dear mother," said Sassie, as she began pouring out the coffee. "How pleased dear Louie will be to see you yourself again, with your sunny smiles and roses returned!"

"Fie, fie, flatterer! You must not spoil me," said the gentle lady, as she sipped her coffee, and watched the lovely, mignon face of her child and its joyous expression, and wondered at the marvellous change in a few short hours.

"I suppose it is the climate; but how very sudden!" thought her mother. "Why, yesterday morning the dear child was listless and low-spirited. Well, well, I care not how it has been cured, so that my sweet Sassie is her old, merry self once more."

As that young lady nibbled her anchovy toast and picked at her cutlet she was musing thus—

"Now, why don't I tell my sweet secret to my darling mother? I have never kept anything from her that made me happy in my life. Why should I now? It is wilfulness or deceit; if the latter, I am unworthy of her affection and devotion. But I love him—yes, oh! so much. King of my heart and of my very life is it wrong to meet him to-day, before I have told you, mother mine? I think I shall be forgiven when I bring my hero, and tell you all, and plead for pardon at your feet. You will forgive me then. He is so noble, so perfect."

Sassie little dreamt what a fatal mistake she was making in this most important step of her life, and the miserable results that would follow. She, poor child, was gloating over her now found happiness, and wished to keep it for a brief time all to herself. It seemed treason to her impulsive young heart to share her confidence yet, even with her doting mother.

It proved the first downward step that would hurl her from Elysium to darkness and misery. So much might have been avoided had she only taken her mother or sister into her confidence.

But it is ever so with youth. They rush impetuously into speculations and dangers self-contained and sufficient, perfectly reckless and

headlines that pitfalls and abysses yawn at their very feet, only seeing the bright, alluring flowers which strewn the path, relying on their own strength and discrimination. It is a wise old adage, "Lookers on see more of the game than the players."

"This is, indeed, kind of you!" said Keith Glendive, when Sessie, with a sweet, shy, little grace all her own, tripped up to him and held out her little gloved hand.

"Nay, I think the kindness is yours for coming to meet me, when your time is so valuable," she replied.

"My time will only be valuable to me in the future when you are near to share it. If I thought otherwise, time and the future would be a dark eternity, too dreary and utterly wretched to live on in," he mused to himself, but he said aloud,—

"Time was made for slaves, and I do not intend to become one, not even in thought."

"How lovely!" exclaimed Sessie, in awe and astonishment, as her eyes roamed around Glendive's studio. "Oh, I feel so ashamed of my dabbler efforts when I see these splendid creations. What a little muff you must have thought me when you watched me! Really, it was quite too bad of you."

Never did praise sound so sweet in the young painter's ears; his face was lit up with animated fire and triumph for his sweet Hebe; his twin soul, as he styled the fair, graceful girl, was fairly delighted and absorbed in his works.

"But what is that one so carefully covered up?" she asked. "May I see it?"

"That is my little surprise I mentioned yesterday," he replied, radiant with excitement. He threw aside the covering and disclosed to Sessie's view a portrait of her own self. There were the earnest grey eyes, the little amber head just bent over her easel, the sweet mobile features true to life and nature, staring her in the face.

The surprise was almost too much, as she realised how faithfully he had chronicled each expression, curve, and line of her features to have produced this lifelike result, and for the moment the room whirled around her, and her brain reeled, and she would have fallen but for the strong arm of Keith, who said tenderly,—

"I was to blame for not preparing you, but I was so lost in my own little schemes of showing you how I have treasured the memory of your face that I can only crave your forgiveness."

"Forgiveness!" she faltered. "What is there to forgive? It is I who am a little goose. Why, you are divinely gifted. You must have been inspired!"

"Yes, I was inspired by love," he exclaimed, and in another moment she was clasped to his heart, and his lips were pressed to her trembling ones in one passionate kiss.

Oh! the ecstatic joy of that brief bliss to Sessie, who lay pale and trembling in his arms. Words failed him in that supreme moment, as he feasted his hungry eyes on the sweet face.

There she lay like a snowflake for a few moments, regardless of danger or anything, except that he, her brave deliverer, loved her—that this god-like man looked down upon her with a world of tenderness in his eyes—eyes that were an eloquence she had never experienced before in her young life.

At last her maidenly instincts were aroused, and she gently, but firmly, disengaged herself from his clinging support, saying timidly,—

"How stupid I was to be unnerved at my portrait, and—"

"The avowal of my love," he added, tenderly. "Was I too bold? Will you never pardon me for my surprise?"

And there she stood, her hands folded, her long, fringed eyelashes caressing her cheek, docile and trembling like a Circassian slave at the market of Constantinople, vanquished by love.

"Come, tell me, darling, with your own sweet lips, that I am forgiven, and that you love me. Think how dear you must have been

to me these dreary months when I could trace your sweet image on that canvas true to life. See, I am pleading on my knees at your feet for your answer."

"Oh, why do you force me to speak!" she exclaimed, as she gazed into those wells of liquid fire. "I love you so dearly that I cannot realise the hour when I did not. You have been the one treasured image in my life since the day you saved me from peril. Oh! my love, do not compel me to tell you that which may cause you to think me unreasonably."

"My queen! my sweet love!" he said, passionately. "I am satisfied," as he imprinted a burning kiss on her white brow.

"Now let me go; I have stayed longer than I should—do not stay me!" she pleaded.

"Before I can part from you, darling, you must tell me your name, and I will tell you mine."

"Oh, yes," she replied, wistfully. "I had quite forgotten that we had such a luxury. Mine is Sessie, and yours?"

"Keith Glendive—here is my card. When I return to England—which will be in May—will you write to me and summon me to your side?" he said, earnestly.

"How strange!" she thought, perplexed. "Why this is the same name as my future brother-in-law," and she was just about to question him when the door was unceremoniously kicked open, and Egerton Tyrie stood before them, hat in hand.

Poor Sessie made a hurried departure, without asking any explanation of the strange coincidence of name, her sweet face suffused with blushes at the sudden, unwelcome interruption.

"You sly dog! so I've caught you, have I, *tête-à-tête* with the loveliest creature my eyes have seen for many a day!" said Egerton, taking out a cigar and lighting it. "I fear I am somewhat *de trop*."

"Stop your badinage," said Keith, impatiently. "Surely you recognised my sweet prototype of your picture?"

"By Jove! what a consummate donkey I am!" returned his friend, with a prolonged whistle. "Of course it's the lovely stranger. I congratulate you, upon my honour I do; but there, tell me where you found her, and why she is here in this painting den alone with you?"

"I met her yesterday in the art galleries," and as he related all the particulars to Egerton his eyes flashed with joy, and his frame trembled with deep emotion.

"How strange it all is! Why, Keith, it is fate, depend upon it; at all events, it would make a pretty little romance. I wish I had the gift of the pen. I'd weave a spicy little story, of course reserving the names of my hero and heroine. But there, old man, accept my hearty congratulations," this as he gave Keith a friendly grip of his hand. "Mind, I must be best man on the auspicious occasion. I might say I almost envy you, for you have won the sweetest girl in the three kingdoms!"

"Thanks, dear old man; I knew you would sympathise with me," replied Glendive, as he returned his friend's warm pressure, "and I promise you that you shall be my prop on the day of bliss which will make my sweet Sessie my own for ever."

"What a poetical name, as pretty as the owner; but how about her people—have you any knowledge of them?" said Egerton.

"Very little as yet, but enough to know that she has but one parent, a doting mother, who refuses her nothing, so my course will be clear, and I shall live now with but one object, one cherished thought—to our reunion in England in May, when I shall sue for my darling's hand. Thank Heaven, I have name and position sufficient enough to aid my suit."

CHAPTER V.

It is spring now in reality, for May, that delicious of all months, has been more than kind, ushering in the budding chestnuts with their delicate pink tinge ready to burst forth in all their

white bridal glory as the warmth increases and the days lengthen.

Golden buttercups deck the fields, trying to outvie the modest, but gentle-eyed daisy. Bouquets and garlands of blossoms, pink and red, meet the eye in every florist's window, while delicate rosebuds of every hue, their stems tucked cooily in long, fragile glasses, tell the ever-welcome news that the summer is near.

The West-end shops are brave with dainty straw hats and bonnets, decorated with sweet spring flowers, broad brimmed hats to be worn gipsy fashion, gay-coloured sunshades fringed with blossoms; while dear old Father Thames, from London Bridge to Oxford, is literally alive with laughing girls manning fairylike little craft, and water-parties are fitting along past the fresh verdant green landscapes, singing snatches of song, much to the amusement and surprise of the water-fowl and haughty swans that swarm the river-side reeds and flags.

"Oh, Louie, this is fairly lovely," exclaimed Sessie, as her sister took out of a box an exquisite pearl-grey satin costume fresh from the milliner's, trimmed with sable. "I never saw such a darling ducky of a thing in my life."

"Wait, Sessie, till you see my wedding dress," replied Louie; "it's simply perfect."

"It cannot be prettier than this!" holding it at arm's length, her pretty eyes dancing with delight at the chaste work of art, for such it was, being a model from Paris.

"What a darling you are! How I shall miss you, Sessie. I wish it were permitted for a bride to have her sister accompany her on her tour," said Louie, with a sigh, as she placed the shimmering robe carefully on a couch.

"I fear Digby would not share your desire, sister mine!" replied Sessie, affectionately, as she twined her arms around her sister's slender waist, and kissed the rosebud mouth with oh! such a wealth of tenderness.

It was a pretty home picture, the two fair girls both very similar in form and feature entwined in each other's arms, a veritable pair of graces, both robed alike in some soft cashmere of palest blue clinging around their symmetrical limbs, making them appear like the Greek maidens of old.

He who could look on such a touching but pretty sight of girlish love and innocence must be callous indeed.

"Perhaps you would not care to make the third, eh, Sessie?" replied Louie, mischievously, "and then tell me, a disguised matron it is to be, that Digby wouldn't like it! Fie, fie, sweet little hypocrite, I know all about it. You are thinking of that prince of knights who rescued you in the Park, and counting the days, nay, the very hours, when he shall come and claim his reward."

"Oh, how you do rattle on, Louie!" she replied, softly, while the telltale blushes bedewed her face.

"Come it's no use denying it, I have guessed right. But, joking apart, it will be the happiest day of my life, dearest Sessie, when I am summoned to attend your wedding. Besides, I am positively dying with curiosity to see this handsome knight, and to thank and—yes, I will confess—kiss him a thousand times for giving mother and me your dear self safe and sound, even if I do tease em's a wee bit. But here comes Hester, so let's make haste and dress for our ride!"

While the preparations were being carried out for the nuptials of Louie Musgrave and Digby Glendive, Keith was working hard in Rome, and the end of April still found him culling knowledge and future success, visiting daily the Palazzo Borghese, where the walls of the upper rooms are covered with the glorious landscapes of the great Verne, whose genius would lead a spectator to believe he was in the midst of green fields and shining rivers.

Here he studied Titian, Raphael, Annibal, Caracci, Albano, and Domenichino, until his frame was weakened and his eyes were fever-laden. His was the true poet's soul, content to wear himself out for his beloved art.

"Come, old man, you must not work too hard," said Egerton, tapping him on the shoulder as

the young painter was putting the finishing touches to a beautiful landscape for a gift to his brother's bride; "see I am going to carry you off for a good walk. Why, your hand burns and your eyes are full of fever. You must either take more rest or you will knock yourself up."

"Oh, there's no need for anxiety, Egerton, I'm all right," he said, cheerfully. "You are aware of what a fellow I am to carry out any task I set myself, and you know the issues at stake, and my ardent desire to make an illustrious name, and for whose dear sake I am straining every nerve to accomplish it."

"I know all that, Keith; but as your old chum and friend, take my advice and pack up every brush and picture, and return to England at once and claim your bride, and take a long holiday."

"Well, I think you are right, old man; for to tell you the truth, I do feel a little jaded. But here comes my man with letters. Will you excuse my opening this one; I see it's from old Digby!"

"Certainly; read away. I'll take a survey of your works, and smoke a weed in the meanwhile."

"Don't move, Egerton, I wish you to hear this one."

"Fire away, then!" said his friend, stretching out his long legs and flicking the dust off his irreproachable boots.

The letter ran thus:—

"DEAR OLD KEITH.—Why haven't you turned up yet! Mother and all the dowagers are distracted at your non-arrival at this auspicious occasion; besides, it's not kind of you, for I do so long to introduce you to your new sister. I feel sure you will love her as she deserves. She is an angel—mind, that is not only my opinion, but that of everyone who comes near my sweet darling."

"Now, I know you would not for the world cloud the happiness of my wedding-day, so return and be in readiness to kiss my bride. The ceremony takes place on the twentieth."

"Longing hearts and arms are waiting for you. From your loving brother,

"DIGBY GLENDIVE."

All is bustle and pleasurable excitement at St. James's, Piccadilly. Carriages are rolling up with smart coachmen and footmen bedecked in white satin favours, a little posy of orange blossoms nestling in each. The whips are also brave with snowy ribbons.

The crowd are fast gathering, as all London crowds do, whether it be a street fight or funeral.

The shopkeepers are infected with the excitement, and gaze out of the windows in hopes of catching sight of the bride, for it is evidently a fashionable affair, as the grand carriages and prancing horses testify, that keep dashing up, bearing lovely girls and stately matrons to the sacred edifice.

It is one of those delicious, rarefied mornings that we get in the early summer, and the sun is glinting in golden glory on the old church, while everywhere the air seems laden with fragrant flowers.

"Here they come!" shouted the excited sightseers. "Oh, how lovely!" is passed from every mouth, as the carriage bearing the sweet heroine of the hour arrived.

"Come, my darling, be brave," whispered Lady Murgrove, as she led Louise up the grey, old steps. "If your brother has not come to assist at your bridal he will very likely arrive before you start."

"It is not for my sake, darling mother, but Digby will be so disappointed and grieved."

On they go as the fine organ peals the wedding march from *Athalie*, the lovely bride in shimmering robes leaning on the arm of her stately mother, whose gentle heart is very sad as she passes the crowded aisle towards the chancel where the bridegroom stands to receive her.

Around her golden head, with its clouds of costly lace, King Sol dances as if with joy, casting prisms of ambient light on the jewels which shone on her hair, neck and arms.

The bevy of fair bridesmaids gathered around her, and fairest of all was Sassie, who stood by her sister's side with a wistful expression in her lovely eyes.

The benediction was said, there was a rustle of silken dresses, the organ again pealed forth in volumes of grand melody, as the bride and bridegroom passed into the vestry.

The signatures were duly signed, and Louise and her husband re-entered the church to receive the congratulations of their numerous friends and relatives.

Just as the bride was passing along to speak to one of her attendants her train became entangled by some brass ornamental nail, tearing the delicate lace.

In a moment she was encircled by her bridesmaids, to put matters straight by pins, &c.

Just then, as if the very power of evil was determined to mar this bright scene, Keith Glendive entered the church and made his way to the group, and saw Sassie in her white robe and tulle veil standing beside his brother Digby.

The sight seemed to turn his brain, and her agitated manner on seeing him added to the frightful delusion that he stood before his brother's bride.

She, poor child, was spell-bound, dumb. Not so Digby, who said,—

"Better late than never. Keith, this is—"

"A traitress!" he exclaimed, excitedly. Then turning to Sassie, he blushed rather than said,—

"May Heaven forgive you, for I never can!" and then rushed madly out of the church before anyone could realise what had occurred.

Sassie, pale as the snowy robes she wore, would have sunk on the floor had not Digby caught her in time.

All was now flurry and excitement, smelling-salts, water, and every kind of restoratives administered amid the—

"Oh, dear! fancy Sassie going off like this! How very odd! Over sensitive, too much for her nerves," &c., from her female friends, who would persist in surrounding the poor girl, shutting out the air—the only thing she needed.

No one knew or guessed what had happened but Digby, who, with great presence of mind, parried off the fair inquisitors, and got Sassie out without any fuss or *esclandre* by placing her between Lady Murgrove and Lord Burlington, his best man.

There was a set, deadly palsy on Keith's face, a wild, fierce gleam in his eyes as he fled out into the brilliant sunshine that seemed to mock him with its very brightness and cheeriness.

One idea, one thought scorched his poor dazed brain, lent wings to his feet. His ideal woman, the dream of his life, she whom he had believed perfect beyond woman, the personification of all that was true and noble, was false—a very female Judas!

"Oh, Heaven!" he groaned, "can such a black soul inhabit so fair a tenement! And this is my poor deceived brother's bride. Oh! merciful Heaven, have pity on him!"

He still strode on, recalling that last day in his studio in Florence, when she dared to tell him as she lay in his arms, "that she never remembered when she first began to love him for it seemed she had always done so."

Her looks, tones, words, stood out black and full of condemnation, and seared him as with a hot iron.

His brother's bride, and he loved her to madness! He knew it now, that he had lost her for ever, by the full force of the burning passion that was consuming his reason and manhood.

"Why did she deceive me?" he cried. "If she had confided in me I might, with the aid of my art and travel, have conquered my feelings before it was too late. Oh! and I rescued her from death for him, my rival!"

Then the evil tempter whispered,—

"Now is the time for revenge and hate," as the father of darkness did to Cain when he turned and slew his brother Abel, and stopping

to wipe the beads of perspiration and bitter anguish from his brow, he cried,—

"Why should my brother stand between Sassie and me? She is mine, doubly mine. Did I not save her life? Is not my love greater than he could ever dream? He shall not tear her from me. I will kill him rather! She is my twin soul, my life. I'll wrest her from his arms. I'll—"

But before he could say another word, a blank came over his whole frame, and staggering, as if drunk with wine, he fell to the earth.

Merciful forgetfulness now came enveloping him in its mantle, and he lay perfectly unconscious, his bonny curls clustering around his head dank and clammy, and lying in rings on his broad, white brow.

No one took any heed of him in Kensington-gardens; they only wondered at seeing evidently a gentleman asleep on the green sward.

"Been making a night of it," remarked the idlers, who passed on, only too glad to say something uncharitable of their brother, who lay defenceless, unable to rebut their bitter sautes.

O ye scoffers and tale-bearers who go about picking holes in thy neighbours' coats, do ye never stay to reflect thus as you have judged thy fellow-men that so will ye be judged on that last great day by an angry and justly incensed Father!

"O seek not with a daring hand to raise
The veil that hides love's sacred mystery,
Lest in the impious act all love should die,
And on your lips its solemn song of praise
Be turned to idle fable."

At last he awoke. The dew of evening were lavishing his hot brow with their welcome freshness, and restoring the poor, tired nature to life and its realities, its joys and sorrows.

All seemed a horrible dream, a nightmare, and he stretched out his hand to feel where he was, and found it caressed and licked lovingly by a dog, his only friend—a poor, half-starved creature, whose soft, brown eyes were looking full of affectionate sympathy at poor, prostrate, weak, Glendive, as much as to say,—

"Your own kind have passed you by, nob giving a second thought or care to learn if you are in trouble; but I, a poor, ill-used kicked cur will stand by you and give you my dumb friendship and interest."

"Why it's a dog!" he murmured, half-raising himself on his elbow to look around, and the creature put his paw on Keith's knee, and rubbed his cold nose against his hot hands and looked into his wan face; and that tender, faithful glance opened the flood-gates of his pent up misery, and he burst into a flood of tears, wrung from his very soul; and as he wept his new friend still sat by patiently, protectingly. At last he felt relieved and said, brokenly, "Poor, faithful creature; I am not worthy of such a friend as you. Will you stay with me! I need sympathy, and you seem to require it too. You have been badly used. Come, old fellow, let's see what kind of an appetite you've got."

He rose to his feet and pulled himself together; his canine friend wagging his shaggy tail with delight. And they wended their way together.

CHAPTER VI.

WHEN the bridal party arrived home Sassie had regained her usual composure apparently, but was unable to appear at the breakfast, much to the grief and disappointment of her mother and sister.

"Come, my pretty ladybird," coaxed her faithful maid, old Hester; "drink this and put the roses on your bonny face again. Why its pretty face is as white as its dress."

"Oh, Hester, I don't want to live!" moaned the poor, heart-broken girl. "Life is now purposeless, a mockery," as she laid her little amber-braided head on Hester's kind bosom.

"But why, dearie? What has happened to you! Come, lay your head here on my shoulder

and confide this sad trouble to your old Hester. Believe me, dear child, when I tell you that your grief will sure to be less if you unburden it. I may advise you; at any rate, I can sympathise with you. Come"—this as she patted the poor, little trembling hand, and pressed the storm-beaten, delicate form in her ample arms, as she had done when Sessie had been a wee child, and stole up to Hester's room for comfort and love.

There amidst bitter sobs she told her tale, withholding nothing that had occurred, and then exclaimed,—

"What have I now to live for, dear Hester, when he whom I loved better than my own life called me traitress, and spurned me with a look of scorn and hate? Oh, it will break my heart! What had I done to deserve this torture?"

"Hush, ladybird, calm yourself. Listen to me. You say he came into the church, and that he is a brother of dear Miss Louise's husband—begging her pardon, I mean Mrs. Glendive. Heaven bless the dear child, she'll never be anything but Miss Louise to me! Can't you see that your lover is labouring under some dreadful mistake? Stop, where were you when he rushed up to you?"

"I was standing by the side of Digby. We were chatting while Louise was by the vestry door having the lace of her train pinned by the bridesmaids."

"I see it all!" cried Hester, excitedly, as she drew Sessie to a cheval glass. "It speaks for itself—he took you for the bride, and in his anger and horror tore out of the place before matters could be set straight."

"Oh! do you really think that was it?" this as she surveyed her white-robed figure critically.

"Look at your veil, your wreath of apple blossoms, which he, not being a female, mistook no doubt for orange blossoms! Depend upon it, he will come pleading for pardon before very long."

"Dear old comforter! I can never tell you how happy you have made me, or how grateful I am for your clear judgment. I feel sure you are right. It was the thought of my deceit in telling him I loved him, and then, as he supposed, seeing me the bride of his brother."

"What did I tell you, dearie? That if you would share your trouble with me that you would feel comforted?"

"I promise now that in the future I will come to you with all my little cares; yes, and even my secrets," she said, as she clasped her beautiful arms round Hester's neck and kissed her lovingly.

Before Digby and his bride started for their tour he told Lady Musgrave what had happened, and promised to move Heaven and earth to find his brother, and to compel him to make an explanation of his strange conduct.

All the gay London season Sessie was missing from the routs, parties, and balls. Not even the combined persuasions of her mother or Hester would induce her to accept an invitation. The only house she visited was her sister's, Mrs. Digby Glendive, who had returned to town to take her place among the grand dames of society—a sweet, interesting, half shy matron, fully alive to the dignity of her new position.

Sessie felt at rest in Mrs. Glendive's charming home in Cromwell-gardens, where she could feast her eyes on Keith's portrait—a magnificent one, too, taken by a brother artist for Digby. Besides, the poor girl was always hoping to learn some tidings of the truant, and naturally felt that here, in his brother's house, she would be sure to hear something soon.

Oh, how weary she felt as days passed and the summer waned! But no tidings of Keith came to ease her mind.

"Will he never come?" she would murmur, as she gazed tenderly, with tear-dimmed eyes, at his portrait, that she fancied looked down upon her sorrowfully and reproachfully.

One day there arrived a packing case addressed to Digby Glendive; and, lo! when it was opened there lay the veritable picture Keith had painted of Sessie, and tucked

between the frame was a letter that ran thus:—

"DEAR DIGBY,—I have sent you the portrait of your wife, which I took fondly believing she was free. It must not remain with me; it is yours by every right. I have tried to school my heart to meet your wife, Heaven knows how hard! but have failed as yet. Time may conquer my rebel heart, and then, perhaps, some day I may return to my dear mother, and look upon you and your wife with the holy feelings of a brother. I beg of you, as you value my happiness and your peace of mind, not to seek me out; but let me pray, as I do earnestly, for yours and your wife's happiness, and for strength to keep me from temptation.—Your unhappy, but resigned brother,

"KEITH GLENDIVE."

"Poor mistaken brother!" sighed Digby. "What would I not give to know where you are, to comfort your heavy heart that is bursting with sorrow for nothing! Poor impulsive Keith! you shall be found. I'll search for you, or perish in the attempt!"

Keith wandered about from one place to another, his faithful dog always beside him, whom he had named Gulliver. When he sat down on some venerable old ruin, or green moss bank covered with purple violets, the dog, now fat and sleek, would crouch beside him, and look up into his grief-stricken face.

One day he thought,—

"Why should I lose my youth and waste the gift that Heaven has blest me with? No, I'll throw off this contemptible feeling of self and live; yes, live for the good of my art and my fellow-men."

And with this brave resolve peace returned to his soul and a holy calm to his eyes, and fresh colours were looked over and he was soon absorbed in his art painting with greater skill and divine genius than he had ever done before in his happiest days.

"A lady, signor, wishes to see you," said a servant.

"Show her in at once," returned Keith.

"I crave your pardon, sir," said a sweet voice, as a delicate-looking woman entered the studio, evidently suffering from some trouble. "I am the wife of Jean Martelli, and he is lying prostrate with fever, just as he was finishing a commission, and unless it is completed by next Wednesday we shall lose the all that he has done, and we can ill afford that."

"I see," he said, kindly, "you want some one to complete it, and have come to me to help you?"

"Yes," she said, softly. "I came to you because you are the friend of struggling artists, and I thought you would perhaps help us."

"I am indeed glad, because it will afford me the greatest happiness to assist you. Will you take me where the picture is? It shall be finished by Wednesday."

She led the way to a large ancient church, and pointed to the high altar where, just beneath three beautifully-painted windows, hung the unfinished picture; on a level with it was the scaffold for the artist to work on.

The subject was the "Divine Child Teaching in the Temple," only the Saviour was wanting.

Keith stood before the half-finished canvas; a glow spread over his countenance, a bright light beamed from his eyes as he conjured up in his fertile imagination the Glorious Child standing in the vacant place; and in another moment, while the inspiration held him, he caught up the pencils that were lying just as they were when the stricken artist was carried out of the church, and sketched the figure of the Redeemer; and as he worked on, watched by the grateful young wife and the priest, a full chorus of fresh young voices burst forth in a grand anthem, the venerable organ pealed and rolled in melody down the aisle, and Keith still worked on thrilled to his very soul, till his preliminary work was finished, and then he was thanked and blessed by the priest and the grateful woman.

"You here, dear old Gulliver!" he said, as the dog raised himself from the marble pavement

where he had been lying waiting for his master outside the building. "I'll make a picture of you, dear old friend, some day."

The next morning found Keith at his post, the next and the next, and as he stood there he looked more like some saint or martyr as the sun streamed in at the windows, casting gorgeous hues of crimson, blue and purple radiance round his finely-shaped head.

At last the painting was finished, the artist's work was done. But poor Keith had toiled night and day to keep his word, unmindful of hunger and even thirst, and he had just sufficient strength to totter down off the scaffold, and then fainted.

There they found him at the foot of the altar.

He was raised with tender hands, and carried into the priest's house, and tended with loving care by sweet, gentle women, Sisters of the Convent.

But while he lay tossing with low fever, brought on by long fastings and absorption in his work, the people flocked from far and near to see the wonderful figure of the Holy Child. And they all stood amazed at the marvellous creation, at the calm, blue eyes that seemed to peer down a flood of light on the wondering doctors who were listening in rapt interest to the words of wisdom proceeding from his parted lips. The shining gold curls rolled down on his shoulders; and the pure white robe flowed to the sandalled feet.

"How lovely! It seems that no mortal man could have painted it," said many. "It is divine!" said others among them. The struggling artist that Keith had helped was able to get about now, and devoted all his time to the poor invalid.

"Shall we never hear any tidings of my darling boy?" cried his poor bereaved mother, one day as she sat tearfully looking out of the hotel window.

"Don't despair, mother dear, now that we are on the right track," said Digby, affectionately. "Who knows, perhaps my darling Louise and Sessie may hear some tidings of him to-day! Come, be brave! all will be well yet, I feel sure."

"Heaven grant it, my son!" she said, fervently.

As she spoke the two girls came into the room, and Louise ran forward, and kissing the old lady gently, exclaimed, "Oh! mother, dear, listen! Sessie and I have found Keith—indeed, we have! You tell Sessie, you are more coherent than I."

In a few brief words Sessie told how they were passing one of the churches, and seeing a great number of people, they entered, simply out of curiosity, and followed them to a magnificent altar-piece, and how murmurs of sympathy were uttered by many at the illness of the gentleman who painted it out of pure kindness, not for money.

"But he may not be my darling boy!" said the old lady, not quite convinced.

"I feel sure it is, dear Mrs. Glendive," replied Sessie; "for we inquired his name, and it is Keith Glendive—there!" and her eyes gleamed and sparkled with a glad joy that made her look her own bright self again.

"May Heaven be praised!" murmured Mrs. Glendive, earnestly.

For days Keith struggled between life and death, but it did not last long. And one day he opened his eyes to consciousness to gaze upon the loving face of his gentle mother.

They closed again in quiet joy. He never asked how she came there—he was content to know that she was with him.

When he was sufficiently strong she told him that Digby and his wife were in Rome, and wished—oh! so dearly—to see him.

"He has seen and been with you, dear; when you were delicious he nursed you."

"And she, mother!" he said, feebly. "Did Sessie come to me too?"

"No, my dear; it was best that she should not see you till you became stronger, but Digby's wife came."

"What are you talking about, mother?" he said, excitedly. "My brother's wife is Sessie!"

"Is it safe! Oh! Heaven help me to un-

burden my child's soul from this cloud of grief that is bearing it down! They say joy never kills. I leave all to Thee who has restored him to a mother's arms!" she murmured.

"Why don't you speak!" he added, impatiently.

"Can you be brave Keith, and listen to me for a few moments?"

"Yes, I can; but you are smiling. Oh; make haste, something tells me—but no, I dare not think, in case I may be plunged into further despair."

"Sassie is not your brother's wife! He married her sister, whom you never saw. You saw Sassie in her bridesmaid's dress, and took her to be the bride, and rushed away."

"Oh! what blind madness! Can she ever pardon one who has so cruelly wronged her?" he groaned.

"Yes; she, poor child, has forgiven you, and now awaits your returning health with oh! such yearning love, that you would try and get well and strong, if it were only to comfort the dear child's faithful heart."

"Well!" he cried, joyfully. "I feel like a giant! See, mother, dear," this as he tried to hurl a cushion to test his strength; but the poor hands trembled sadly, and with sweet, happy smile, he continued, "I feel drowsy. I think I could sleep now. But where is my dog? Is he safe, I wonder?"

"Yes, Keith, the dear creature is here, on a soft mat the kind sisters have had placed for him outside your door. The poor thing would not leave you. See!" this as she opened the door and let the delighted Gulliver in, just to, as his mother smilingly said, congratulate the patient on his recovery.

All traces of care and anguish were gone from his face; a serene smile of rapture now replaced them; and his mother knelt reverently by the sleeper's bedside and offered grateful thanksgiving to a merciful Father who had saved the life of her beloved son, and who was lost and was found.

In a week's time Keith was sufficiently strong to be removed in a comfortable easy carriage to the hotel where his mother was staying.

On seeing his brother Keith exclaimed, as he clasped the outstretched hand,—

"Dear, dear old Digby, can you ever forgive me my blundering stupidity?"

"Forgive, old man! Why, there's nothing to forgive! You behaved nobly under the circumstances; and you are dearer to me than ever. But there is one who owes every reparation that lies in your power—one who has been your guardian angel, and is true as steel. Such a woman is, as St. Paul truly said, 'Far more precious than rubies.' Take her from the hands of your brother," this as sweet Sassie entered the room at a given signal, and was folded to his throbbing heart.

With gentle tread Digby left the room and the happy lovers to themselves, feeling that their meeting was too sacred for other eyes to witness.

In the early spring, when the primroses, daffodils, and violets were in full flower, there was a wedding at the same church as before, St. James's, Piccadilly, but the bride was even more lovely than the other, and created as much sensation.

It was Sassie's bridal with her noble knight, Keith Glenlived; and the Honourable Egerton Trye was best man to the happy bridegroom. Mr. and Mrs. Digby Glenlived, the stately Lady Musgrave, and Mrs. Glenlived, stood by the handsome young couple; as also did Hester, looking quite radiant in her silver grey silk and smart white bonnet, a gift from her dear young mistress.

There was a perfect garden of pretty girls, causing Egerton's attention to be somewhat divided, as he speculated in his mind which one out of them all to go in and win before the day of days was ended.

As the bridal party left the church his mind was fully made up, and the beautiful Maude Stanley was the chosen one, much to her delight, if blushes and dimples tell the truth.

Bright flowers strewn the path of bride and

bridegroom; and the sweet face of Sassie gleamed through her veil, with her shy eyes sparkling with a rare light, rivaling the gems that tried to outshine them, as they glinted in the rays of the sun on her neck and arms.

"My wife, my heart's treasure!" said her husband, as he clasped the slight form to his heart when they were alone in the carriage, "My joy is complete."

A seraphic smile came into Sassie's face as she replied, nervously,—

"Darling husband, sweet title that I can now cherish for ever, my bliss is more than complete. My one earnest desire will be to make myself more worthy of your love."

"The one haunting thought that drove me mad almost, took this shape—Was she true?" he said. "And now it is set at rest for ever."

At this happy juncture, Gulliver—the carriage having stopped at the mansion—gave a joyous bark, and rattled his new silver collar, to which was appended a wedding favour, as much as to say,—

"Dear master and mistress, don't I look brave in my finery! And haven't I, as well as your darling mistress, been true!"

[THE END.]

MADLINE GRANT.

—OF—

CHAPTER XXX.

MR. GRANT devoured his dinner with gusto. His appetite was in good case, and asked no more troublesome questions.

He soon afterwards took himself off to bed, leaving his daughter to sing and make merry as she chose; and she did sing, as we have noted, song after song, but after awhile she went over and sat upon the fender-stool, in front of the identical fire that had been a furnace for her ring, and tried to think honestly that she had done right.

She offered a sop to her conscience in assuring herself that next morning, hail, rain, or snow, she would go down to Holt Hill, and see Harry, and have a good serious talk with his nurse.

Her father would not be out of bed till twelve o'clock, and thus the coast would be clear.

She carried out this resolution to the letter, arriving at a little after nine at the farm in a station fly, much to Mrs. Holt's amazement, and spending a good two hours in her and her nursing's company.

She asked many questions, and was warmly assured that, though little Harry was not to say a great big strong boy like Tom, the ploughman's child of the same age, yet that nothing ailed him but his teeth, and that the double high ones were through now, and she, his mother, need give herself no uneasiness.

"Mr. Glyn was full of fancies. He was twice down last week, and had been telling her, maybe, and alarming her for nothing."

"Mr. Glyn—Mr. Glyn," said Madeline, becoming scarlet, and feeling a certain huskiness in her throat, but knowing that the fact she was about to disclose must come out sooner or later, and that the first blow is half the battle, "Mr. Glyn and I have had a serious disagreement. We have agreed to differ, and to part," looking steadily into the fire.

"Laws, gracious mercy!" ejaculated Mrs. Holt, nearly dropping Master Glyn, "you don't say so! Goodness gracious, you don't mean it, ma'am! You are joking!"

"No, indeed," very decidedly, "I am not, Mrs. Holt; and you need not call me 'ma'am' any more, for, although I am married, I am going back to be Miss—Miss Grant, always. Please never call me Mrs. Glyn again."

"But you can't do that," exclaimed Mrs. Holt, in a loud tone of expostulation. "You are married right and tight as much as I am, unless,"

lowering her voice, "it's a divorce you are after getting."

"Divorce, no! Nothing of the sort; but Mr. Glyn and I have agreed to be—to be strangers, and to forget we have ever been married, and as I am only known to many as Miss Grant it is quite easy."

"It's nothing of the sort, ma'am," energetically, "and you are mad to think of such a thing. Why, I might just as well go and call myself Kate Fisher once more, and say I was never married to Holt. That would be a fine How do you do! and we had no children. Now, in your case it's worse, and more ridiculous to think of still. What's to be done about this boy? Who is his mother? You can't well say Miss Grant, now, can you? Believe me," seeing her visitor's face of crimson astonishment, "it won't do. It's just one of these common quabbles among married folks that blows over. Why, Holt and I has many a tiff, and we are none the worse. You and Mr. Glyn must just make it up. You are both young, and maybe he is a bit determined like, and wishes to have his own way, as most men do; but excuse me, ma'am, as your friend and wishing well to you, and a much older woman than yourself, if I make too bold. You are a bit trying. You see it's not pleasant for a young fellow to have his wife leave him for a year, and go galivanting about as a young unmarried lady; and then Mr. Glyn is greatly set upon the child; and a man, somehow, of course, expects that his wife will look after his children herself. Excuse me again, ma'am, if I make too free, but I don't like to see a young girl going astray, even of a rank far above me, without just giving her a word," wiping her hot face as she spoke with her handkerchief.

Madeline sat in silence, feeling very red and very wretched, but all the same very much bent on her own way.

"You forget that there are always two sides to the question, Mrs. Holt," she said at last. "I know you mean very kindly, but there is my father to be thought of. He is an invalid. I am his only child, and I must study him—you understand?"

"Maybe if he wasn't so rich you would not think of him so much," put in Mrs. Holt, bluntly.

"Yes, I would," retorted Madeline, hotly, stung by this sneer; "but I see that you are prejudiced, Mrs. Holt. You forget what the Bible says about honouring your father and your mother."

"No, no, I don't; but the Bible says a deal about husbands and wives, too. I don't forget that. Stick to your husband. It's the law of the land and it's the law of the Bible," said Mrs. Holt, in her most unyielding voice.

She also said a great deal more, but she failed to persuade her visitor or to bend her pride, and she soon perceived that it was no use.

Money and grandeur, she told herself, had turned her head. Some day she would be sorry for what she was doing now; and, anyway, it was an ill and thankless business for a third party to meddle between a married couple.

She had always known that he was the best of the two, and maybe Holt would allow she was right now.

Here was this young lady turning her back on husband and child, and taking for good her maiden name, and going off to foreign countries. Pretty doings—very pretty doings!

At eleven o'clock her fly returned for Madeline. Time was up; she must go. She kissed little Harry over and over again, and wept a few tears as she said,—

"How I wish I could take him with me, even if I could smuggle him as my maid's little boy!"

"Sakes and stars, Mrs. Glyn!" exclaimed Mrs. Holt, angrily, "what are you thinking of. I wish his father heard you. Pass him off as a servant's child! Well, upon my word, I never—"

At this crisis words ran short; she could say no more.

"Mind you write to me often, Mrs. Holt, even

ony line. You have our address, 'Villa Frascati, Nice.' I have left you a dozen stamped and directed envelopes. Please—please write to me at least once a week."

And with a hurried "good-bye" she stepped into the fly, pulled down her veil, and sat back as she was driven from the door, leaving Mrs. Holt and her son upon the steps, the former saying—

"Well, if she don't beat all! Miss Grant, indeed!" whilst Master Glyn dragged violently at her apron, and, pointing to the rapidly-disappearing carriage shouted gleefully, "Gee-gee, gee-gee!"

Madeline in another week was very pleasantly settled in a charming villa, looking over the Bay of Nice and the Promenade des Anglais.

There luxury had, as usual, changed everything into all that was charming and enjoyable.

She had a carriage, a pair of pretty ponies, a garden and tennis-ground, and gave delightful dinners and "at homes," for many of their London friends had also come south.

Her father lavished presents on her, and she was surrounded wherever she went by a brilliant pagantry of flatterers and followers.

The horizon before her was bright. She could not help feeling a pardonable pride in the sensation she created in her brilliant social triumphs—in seeing piles of bouquets left daily at her door, in seeing her name in enthusiastic little paragraphs in the local papers; in knowing that the fact of her expected presence brought crowds to an entertainment to see the "beautiful Miss Grant;" to know that she had not a want in the world, nor a wish, so she told herself, unfulfilled.

Was not this all-sufficient to prove that her millennium of happiness had commenced? She was the professional beauty of the place, though she was in this particular the victim of an unsought reputation.

She never deliberately aspired to this doubtful honour, and the character had been, to a certain extent, forced upon her.

All the same, in her secret heart, she did not dislike her position—a sort of social queen—and as to Mr. Grant he simply gloried in it and made no secret of the fact.

Worth had *certe blanche*. Madeline's costumes must be worthy of her, so must Madeline's jewels, and Madeline was not averse to the suggestion.

A new hat, which became all the rage, was named after her. Such is fame! A new yacht was honoured by the same distinction. Youth, beauty, wealth, and distinction!

Fortune seemed to go out of her way to crowd favours on this lucky young lady; but, alas! we all know by bitter experience that fortune is a fickle jade, who smiles at one moment and who frowns the next.

Thus, as a kind of divinity in a gay social paradise, weeks glided on with Madeline.

Spring had come, of course, ere this. Sea and sky reflected each other, sunbeams glanced from the waves, the water seemed to laugh, the whole face of nature was one good-natured smile.

The windows of the house were ablaze with flowers, the turf under the olives was covered with anemones. Jonquils, tea-roses and narcissus filled the air with their fragrance. Carnival had commenced.

Madeline was in a state of feverish gaiety and exhilaration. All her regrets and all her little winges of remorse, and she had had some, had succumbed to the anodyne of a season on the Riviera—and such a season!

But her spirits received a rude shock the very first day of the Carnival in the form of a letter, ill-scratched and ill-spelt, from Mrs. Holt, which ran as follows:—

"HONORED MADAM—I think it rite to let you so that little Harry has been very poorly the last two days. In case he is not better I think you ought to know, and might wish to come home. It's his back teeth. The doctor looked very carius last evening, and spoke of convul-

sions, but I don't wish to frighten you, and I am your humble servant,

"KATE HOLT."

This was a severe blow—the rush of maternal impulse swept all else away.

She thrust aside her diamonds, ball dress, bouquets and masks, and hurried off to the telegraph office, and despatched a message,—

"If he is not better I shall start to-night, reply paid;" and then she returned to the villa, quivering and trembling with impatience.

In case of the worst she told Josephine to pack a few things, as she might be going to England by the night express.

Josephine's jaw dropped, she was enjoying herself enormously; the Carnival was just in full swing, this was terrible! Must she be torn away too!

Her face expressed her feelings most accurately, and Madeline hastened to reassure her.

"I shall not require you, Josephine; I only go to see a sick friend. If I hear no good news I go this evening; if they are better I stay; but I think I'm almost sure I shall go."

How was she to announce her departure to her father?

She made the plunge at once; her fears and her anxiety were not on his account now.

She felt desperate and ready to dare anything or brave anybody.

She ran down into his cool sanctum, with its wide windows open and looking on the bay, its gaudy-coloured awnings, and its wealth of cut flowers; and, finding her parent smoking a cigarette and reading the money article, abruptly exclaimed,—

"Papa, I've had bad news from England; a friend of mine is very ill, and if I do not have a letter to-night I go off by the mail."

"Madeline!" he cried, laying down the paper and gazing at her in angry astonishment, "what are you thinking of! Your sick friend has her own relations; they would never expect you to go flying to her bedside from the very end of France. Nonsense, nonsense!" he concluded, imperatively, once more taking up the news and arranging his "pince-nez" with grave deliberation.

But Madeline was determined to make a show of resolution too, and said,—

"Papa, in this matter I must have my way; it's not often I take my own course; I do everything, go everywhere to please you. You must give way to me sometimes."

Mr. Grant pushed back his chair a full yard and gazed at his daughter with the liveliest expression of astonishment.

"Do not throw any obstacles in my way, papa, nor ever ask me where I am going—it is to see one who is very dear to me."

"Ah—ah—ah! not your lover, I hope, madam?" he gasped.

"No; let that suffice, and let us understand one another, father, at once, and plainly. I have been a good daughter to you; I have made sacrifices for you that you have never heard of or dream of!—Ah! the poor curate, thought Mr. Grant to himself—and you must give me more liberty. I am of age to go and come as I please unquestioned; I am no longer a child in leading strings. I can take excellent care of myself, and I must have more freedom!"

"Must—must—must! How many more musts? Well, at any rate, you are a girl to be trusted, and what you say is fair enough. You've given up, probably, some girlish fancy; you have nursed me; you are a credit to me; and I'll not say nay. You can go and come as you please on the 'trust me all in and out at all' principle. You have your advantages too, Madeline; a fine home plenty of everything money can buy. But we will not go into that now. The question is, to put the matter in a nutshell, when do you start? How much cash do you want? and when will you be back?"

If Madeline were to kick over the traces and marry and leave him it would not be pleasant; she represented his pass-key to rank and social success.

"By the mail, alone. I have plenty of money,

and I'll not remain in England later than a few days. I'll be back for the regatta, you will see."

And so, with a few more remarks and assurances and expostulation on Mr. Grant's part at her travelling alone, she pocketed a cheque pressed upon her, and left the room conqueror for once!

Her father was easier to deal with than she had expected. Hugh was right!

Then she rushed upstairs to her own sanctum and locked the door, tore off her dress, and put on her dressing gown, and sat down—in a fever both of mind and body—to wait—wait for the telegram.

She sat with her eyes fastened on the clock, her mind a perfect prey to her fears.

Supposing the child was dead! She shuddered involuntarily. If it were she should go out of her senses.

Her anxiety increased with every hour.

She was in a frenzy of impatience, now pacing the room, now sitting, now standing, unable for a moment to find rest for mind or body.

Now a knock came to the door at last—Josephine's knock and Josephine's voice.

"A telegram for you, miss."

Her hands shook so much she could hardly open the door, hardly tear asunder the envelope or read its contents.

Josephine had never seen her mistress in this frantic distraught-looking state before—her colour like death or the colour of her gown; her face haggard, her eyes wild, her hair hanging behind her in loose abandon. What did it mean?

The telegram brought good news. It said,—

"He is much better, no danger whatever; you need not come."

It did not say who was the sender—whenever it was it mattered little; the relief was great. What a fright Mrs. Holt had given her—and all for nothing!

CHAPTER XXXI.

HUGH had taken only one person into his confidence, and that was Mr. Jessop. As he sat smoking a post-midnight cigar over the fire in his friend's chambers, he told him "that Mrs. Glyn no longer existed. She wished to sink the name in Miss Grant; she preferred her present life, and wished to keep her marriage a secret always from her father."

This much Hugh had divulged. He felt that he must speak to someone; his heart was so sore he could not keep silence, and who so fitting a confidant as his old friend Dicky Jessop!

He was chivalrous to Madeline in spite of all that had come and gone, and veiled her defection as well as he could, not speaking fully out of the bitterness of his soul; but Mr. Jessop's active imagination filled in all the delicately traced outline, perhaps in rather a too black a shading if the truth were known.

However, he kept his surmises discreetly to himself, and puffed and pondered for a long time in silence. At last he spoke,—

"I would let her alone, and not bother your head, Hugh. She will come back."

"I don't think so," said his companion, curtly.

"She will come back on account of the child."

"And what would such a coming back be worth to me! It will not be for my sake," retorted Mr. Glyn, with a face of rigid pallor, and holding his feelings under difficult restraint.

"I know something else that would bring her back like a shot out of a seventy-four pounder," said Mr. Jessop, after another pause, meditatively surveying the coals as he spoke. "Your paying attention to another woman! Get up a strong, remarkable flirtation, and she will be here before you can say Jack Robinson! Jealousy will bring her hither if your plans will suit."

"I wouldn't give a button for the affection of a woman who was influenced solely by what you have suggested. No, no. I married her before she knew her own mind—before she had a chance of seeing other people, of knowing the world, or of having sufficient strength to resist temptations such as have been so unexpectedly placed in her path. On five hundred a year, and with no grand rich relations, Maddy and I would have

been happy enough. As it is, she is happy enough, and I must get on as I can alone. I made a mistake. I was too hasty. I shall abide by the position she has placed me in with what self-respect and fortitude as is left to me."

"Nevertheless you married her, and gave her a home when she had no friends," put in Mr. Jessop, sharply—Mr. Jessop who, at the bottom of his heart, was very fond of Hugh, and very, very angry with Madeline.

"It's not everyone I would tell, Dick," said Hugh, "but you are my oldest friend. You are welcome to be introduced to the skeleton in my cupboard—an old friend's privilege—we need never talk of it again. I suppose people get over these things in time. There's nothing for it but work, plenty of work," he concluded, with an air of hard determination in his manner.

Although he talked in this cool, self-restrained way, Mr. Jessop knew by years of experience that Hugh, who never made much fuss about his feelings, felt the blow in every nerve—in every fibre of his mind and body.

"Do not think too hardly of her, Dicky," he said, promptly, reading the other's thoughts. "She is very young, very pretty. I'm only a poor, hard-working barrister, and she had an awful time once—you know when. We must never forget how she came through that ordeal; and, after all, no one is my rival. If she does not care for me she cares for no other man. My only rival, the one who has ousted me, is riches. The enormous strength of wealth has pushed me out of her heart and thoughts, and no doubt time will thrust her out of mine."

"Time! stuff! Time will never thrust away the fact that she is the mother of your child; he is a tie between you that neither riches, nor time, nor any amount of nonsense you may talk, nor any amount of matrimonial difference, can ever break. Bear that in mind, Hugh!"

"You are mistaken in your idea of the whole case, Jessop, and under a totally wrong impression. Nothing can ever bridge over the gulf between Madeline and me, unless she chooses to come back of her own accord and unsex a great deal that she has said, and this I am convinced she never will do—never! She does not care a straw for me, and was delighted to accept the freedom which I offered her."

"And what a fool you were to do it!" exclaimed the other, contemptuously.

"Not at all. I should be a far greater fool to try to keep a wife who was really not even one in name, and who never cast a thought to me from month's end to month's end. I shall be—say, I am—free too!"

"But not in a legal sense, my dear boy; you cannot marry again."

"No, thank you!" sarcastically, knocking the ashes off his cigar very deliberately as he spoke. "Once is enough! The burnt child dreads the fire. I made a bad start this time; and even if I had the chance I would not tempt fate again, no matter under what provocation. I intend to make my profession my mistress, and to devote myself to her heart and soul. The law is a steady old lady."

"And a very cantankerous, hard, flinty-faced old lady you will find the Goddess of Justice, my dear fellow. I gave up paying my addresses to her some time ago; and I intend, now that my uncle has left me a tidy legacy, to settle down in comfort in his old manor house—shoot, fish, hunt a bit, burn my wig, gowns, and law books—and turn my back for ever on the Inns of Court and bachelors' dinners."

"Jessop, you are not in earnest!"

"I am," emphatically; "and what's one man's loss in another man's gain—it will be all the better for you, my dear fellow. Since you are so much bent on the woolpack I'll give you a heave-up with pleasure. You will now get all Bagge's business for one thing, and let me tell you that that's no trifle!"

Leaving the two barristers in consultation and dispute over their fire and their cigars we return to Madeline, who, now quite satisfied and reassured by various letters from Mrs. Holt,

declaring "that Harry had cut his teeth first-rate, was never better in his life," threw herself with abandon into everything in the way of entertainment that claimed her, and that was a good deal.

After a very brilliant season at Nice, the English residents began to talk of house-agents in London, of new carriage-horses, &c., and, presently, to wend their way back to their native metropolis; but Mr. Grant, alarmed by the local doctors, still stayed on and on, regardless of increasing heat and increasing exodus.

At last he declared for a tour among the nice cool Swiss mountains; anything was better than London just now, in his opinion.

But Madeline was discontented at this arrangement. She had ties that drew her to England; at least, one tie—little Harry.

She had not seen him for six months; how was she to manage a trip to Holt Hill on her own account?

Lady Rachel, to her immense relief and delight, solved this problem by asking her to come over and pay her a month's visit in Wilton-crescent.

"Do come, my dear," she said, in her little scented note, "it will be a charity. My old man has become a perfect dragon; he is as bad as two bears, and won't go out anywhere."

"I must have some pretty young girl to chaperone as an excuse, and you must spare me a month."

"Levanter is abroad, in Turkey, of all places. I have a room ready for you, and I shall expect you in time for the first Drawing Room."

"We shall have no end of fun, I quite foresee already; the invitation cards come pouring in thick and fast."

"I have told a few of my intimates that I am daily expecting Miss Grant, so mind that you do not disappoint your enthusiastic admirer,"

RACHEL JONES.

"Levanter is abroad." This one sentence, these three words were a vast additional inducement.

Stupid, heavy, tenacious Levanter was quite an old man of the sea to Madeline's imagination, and he was abroad, in Turkey of all places!

The further the better, as far as she was concerned; and she, therefore, accepted the invitation of Levanter's sister with effusion, and a fortnight later was comfortably installed in Wilton-crescent.

The next thing to accomplish was a visit to the Berkshire farm-house, and that was by no means so easily managed as one would suppose, but after a week Madeline boldly took the bull by the horns, and told Lady Rachel that she was going down to see some old friends in the country the next day but one, and would be away from breakfast-time till dark; in short, not to expect her till she saw her.

"Nothing like putting a bold face on the matter," she said to herself, and she departed without raising the least trace of misgiving in her hostess's self-engrossed little mind.

It was a lovely June morning as she walked up the little front entrance to the farm-house, and saw Harry, her Harry, a sweetly-pretty little fellow, with fair curly hair and surprised dark eyes, sitting alone upon the doorstep, nursing a pointer puppy.

It was useless for her to ask in her most winning manner,—

"Harry, don't you know me! Darling boy, I am your mother."

Harry simply frowned, and shook his curls, and clutched the puppy tightly in his arms, as if he meant to throttle it.

Presently Mrs. Holt herself came upon the scene, with turned-up sleeves, fresh from the dairy.

She was very civil and very cool, invited Madeline into the little parlour, dusted a chair for her, and did her best to soften the rigidity and inauspiciousness of little Harry's aspect.

After some talk about the weather, Nice, and Harry's eye-teeth, she said,—

"Suppose you and he just go round the garden, ma'am, and make acquaintance. I'll leave you to yourselves whilst I go and see about your dinner."

"But, pray, don't get anything extra for me, Mrs. Holt," implored Madeline. "Just what you have yourselves, now, please. I shall be very angry if you make a stranger of me."

Mrs. Holt muttered some incoherent answer, and went her way, saying to herself,—

"Not make a stranger of you! And what else! Not make any difference for you! I'm thinking you'd look very glum if I was to set you down to our fare—beans and bacon—my grand young London lady. Dear me, but she is changed!"

Harry and his mother, as desired, went round the garden hand-in-hand. He could talk very well now, and trotted along by her side, considerably thawed in manner.

This process was due to a lovely ball she had produced from her pocket, a splendid picture book, and a packet of chocolate creams.

He chattered away in the most friendly manner, showed her the bees, the pigeons, and all what he considered were the lions of the place.

By the time that one o'clock dinner was ready the couple were excellent friends, and he had gone so far as to kiss her, and put his little holland-clad arms round her neck of his own accord, and the sensation was very pleasant.

After dinner—not consisting of beans and bacon—Madeline and Mrs. Holt had a long *tête-à-tête*.

The condition of Harry's health was first disposed of, then the state of his wardrobe came under discussion.

"I should tell you, ma'am, as you ask, that all the pretty frocks you sent from France are just lying there. Mr. Glyn won't allow him to wear one of them, nor anything you send."

"And why not, pray?" demanded the other, angrily, with considerably heightened colour.

"He told me quite serious, one day," said Mrs. Holt, now speaking with ill-suppressed satisfaction, "that what he had worn and was wearing as you gave him, he might wear out, but no new things were to be accepted ever, as you had now nothing to do with the child; so I put them all by, just as they came, in the front-room wardrobe."

"What does he mean?" asked Madeline, sharply.

"I'm sure, ma'am, you know better than I do; and he said he'd no objection to your seeing the child now and then—but that was all. I fancy Mr. Glyn can be very stiff and determined," smoothing out her apron with a certain solemn air of disapproval—not of him, but of her visitor.

Madeline said nothing, but she felt a good deal.

Mrs. Holt, from her manner more than her words, sat in judgment on her. She, this farmer's wife, actually catechised the beautiful, spoiled Miss Grant.

"You see, mum," she proceeded, "you are, and you are not the child's mother. He does not recognize you—that—I mean the child himself. You have kept too long away. In course you can't be in two places at once, nor be both Miss Grant and Harry's mother. Tisn't my wish nor my own doing as I have taken your place with the child. He is main fond of me; and then poor Mr. Glyn, he felt your leaving him at first, but he is getting over it, too. Men haven't as much feeling as we think."

Madeline listened with a guilty conscience. Every word went home to her with as much force as a blow.

She had now chosen her line, and she must stick to it—"single blessedness." There was to be no going back.

This conviction made her reckless, and she rushed with engerness into the full tide of London gaiety, with a passionate desire to escape from the past, to get away from the oppression of a still tender conscience, to annihilate memory by some great and effective action and be happy!

But memory was not so easily stifled. Among



MADELINE LISTENED TO MRS. HOLT WITH A GUILTY CONSCIENCE.

all her social successes, in the midst of the most dazzling triumphs, she often cast a look round among the crowd for Hugh.

Perhaps if he were to see her in the full blaze of success he would think twice before he permanently renounced such a treasure.

She felt hot and angry when she thought of Hugh, but still she longed to see him, to hear of him. There was no one like him, after all, odious and tyrannical, and unreasonable as he had been lately; but surely he could not mean to abandon her in reality!

This idea had but little place in her mind when she was abroad. Everything and everybody was different.

She used, in a strange place, far away from Hugh and Harry, drop a misty cloud over the past, and feel as if she really was Miss Grant; but here in London, where she had lived as a married woman, and had struggled, and what a struggle! with the awful cares of how to support a household on nothing, the idea was unnatural—nay, it went farther, it was improper!

Though Hugh and she had had a very desperate quarrel he was her husband all the same. He could never have another wife as long as she lived, neither could she have another husband.

She would, perhaps, write to him some day and hold out the olive branch, but not yet; and meanwhile she must see him.

This was an easy matter. She would make Lady Rachel take her to the Temple Church. She knew that he went there every Sunday. And Lady Rachel, little guessing the reason of her guest's anxiety to behold the Temple Church and hear the Dean, procured three tickets for benches' seats (for Levanter had now returned, much to Madeline's disgust), and occupied these places the ensuing Sunday morning.

They were roomy and elevated, and commanded an excellent view of the whole centre of the church, where all the members of the various firms sat.

They came in gradually—not in legal garb, as Madeline expected, but in their usual dress, and

she strained her eyes so eagerly that sharp little Lady Rachel nudged her and said,—

"Who are you looking for, Maddie?"

"Oh—no one," colouring, as she uttered this falsehood. "It's such a very interesting old place—I like looking round. What crowds of people who cannot get in, and have to stand!"

At this juncture the organ pealed out, and everyone stood up as the choir filed, and just immediately afterwards Lady Rachel exclaimed excitedly, of course in a whisper,—

"There's Mr. Glyn—do look!"

And sure enough there was Hugh and another barrister coming in late and in the wake of the choir—as it were bringing up the rear of the procession.

Of course Madeline never took her eyes off him, and followed him as he found a seat at the end of a pew, luckily well within her view. He could not see her, but she could study him undisturbed, especially when she knelt down with her two hands shielding either side of her face from watchful Lady Rachel.

He looked well—a little grave, perhaps a degree older. All his mind seemed engrossed in the sermon later on, to which he listened with folded arms and a judicial air, as if he were weighing every word of it in his mind, and as though it were a summing-up of evidence being laid before a jury, of which he was a member.

There was no abstracted air about him—his mind was on the alert. He had evidently cast the past behind him, and was living wholly in the present.

The sermon concluded, crowds flocked out of church and scattered outside.

Lady Rachel still lingered and looked, then exclaimed in a disgusted tone,—

"I wanted to have asked Mr. Glyn to lunch if I had seen him to speak to"—shaking out her lace parasol, and opening it with a jerk of annoyance—"but there he goes! He has been already marched off by that girl in cream colour, along with the old gentleman in the white hat—do you see? It's perfectly disgusting, the way

in which girls run after men nowadays! However, it is a mistake for girls to think that men will marry them. They amuse themselves to any amount, and then take some quiet little country girl. As to Mr. Glyn, a girl will have to get up very early in the morning to catch him! I believe he is a frightful flirt!"

(To be continued.)

A NEW submarine boat is about the shape of a whale twenty-six feet long and between five and six feet in diameter through the middle. It consists of three sections of high-grade metal securely bolted together. The boat is propelled by a screw, and has a speed of about seven or eight knots an hour. The motive power is an electric battery.

A CAREFUL examination of the trees that are struck by lightning shows that over half of them are white poplar. From this fact scientists conclude that the poplar has some value as a conductor of lightning. This being the case, agriculturists are advised to plant these trees in the vicinity of their farm buildings. An additional suggestion is the attaching of lightning rods to two or three of the tallest of these trees. This will, it is stated, almost absolutely ensure buildings against being destroyed by electric storms.

GASOLINE bicycle is the latest. The gasoline is contained in a reservoir, and the vapour ignited by a lamp so as to explode in the cylinder and work the piston backward and forward. The piston turns the rear or driving-wheel of the bicycle round, and the whole machine is moved forward or backward as the case may be. The rider has only to start, stop and steer, or regulate the speed. The new bicycle is coming rapidly into favour all over the Continent. It may be added that a cellular tire for cycles has made its appearance, the india-rubber containing cells or chambers of oval section, and elasticity comparable to that of the pneumatic tire.



"AH!" SAID JOCELYN WITH A SIGH OF RELIEF, "I FEAR I MUST TROUBLE YOU WITH A RATHER LONG STORY."

POOR LITTLE DOROTHY.

—O—

CHAPTER XIX.

PUNCTUALLY as the train from King's Aston steamed into Matching station with Sir Charles Peyton and young Avenal among the passengers, Mr. Carter was there to meet it, and as the two had a compartment to themselves and the train went on express, it followed that the three gentlemen had ample opportunity for a private consultation.

Mr. Carter had not been idle. Early as the hour was he had already driven over to Peyton Royal to see if the post had brought any news of Miss Lester.

He was rewarded by finding that Mrs. Gibson had received a few lines telling her to send all letters to the Princess Hotel, where Miss Lester would be staying until the end of the week.

"We had better go and see her," said Sir Charles. "I don't like hitting anyone in the dark, and I'd far rather warn Janet Lester that we suspect her of mischief."

Mr. Carter shrugged his shoulders and remarked that cunning should be met by cunning, but the Baronet carried the day, and by twelve o'clock presented himself at the Princess Hotel, but here a clerk answered him. The porter (after going to the office to enquire) reported that though a suite of rooms had been engaged for Miss Lester and her niece, the ladies were not expected till the following day.

"Yet we know she is in London," commented Sir Charles to his companions as they left the hotel; "it looks odd, doesn't it?"

Mr. Carter had had the foresight to write the evening previous to a detective with whom he had before done business, and made an appointment, so their second call was more successful than their first, for Mr. Wilmot was in and expecting them.

By unspoken consent Mr. Carter was spokesman. The detective listened with great atten-

tion; he seemed to see that the case might prove both interesting and remunerative. He heard everything, including Jocelyn's theory that Miss Lester's friendly overtures to Violet Nairn, showed she wanted to get possession of the girl who so strangely resembled her niece.

The detective was a stout, burly man, with a fair complexion, a beardless face, and an expression of such placid equanimity, that Sir Charles felt inclined to fancy his skill had been overrated. He was so long in speaking that the silence grew monotonous. At last he said,—

"You want to discover two things—first, what mysterious attraction Lovel Dolby has for Miss Lester that she is so anxious for her niece to marry him; second, the present abode of Miss Dorothy Peyton. Well, the last question must wait till the first is solved."

"The first puzzles me," admitted Sir Charles. "Janet Lester can't be in love with him because he's young enough to be her son; besides, if she loved him she wouldn't want to marry him to someone else."

"I should say she was not in love with him, certainly," returned the detective. "I'll go a step further and suggest she personally dislikes him. She is in his power, gentlemen," and he brought down his clenched fist on the table with a bang. "Dolby has some secret of the lady's in his keeping, and her niece's hand is the price of his silence."

Sir Charles looked bewildered.

"That's a splendid hit, sir, if you can discover the secret."

"I'm not afraid of failure. I have heard of this Mr. Dolby before. Some months ago—a year and a half, to be particular—a gentleman wanted me to shadow him. Dolby had been his friend and a frequent visitor at his house. Latterly my client (we will call him Mr. Brown) discovered that after each visit of Dolby's he missed something—sometimes of value, sometimes not. I tracked Dolby into a pawnbroker's shop, and saw him try to pledge some of the stolen articles.

"Of course there was a pretty to-do, but he grovelled at Mr. Brown's feet and begged him not to prosecute for his mother's sake, and my client was fool enough to let him off on condition that he never entered his presence again, and with the threat that Brown would publish the proofs of the crime if he ever saw Dolby trying to ingratiate himself with any one in whom my client felt interested."

"At Mr. Brown's request I kept my eye on the young fellow, but very soon after he went abroad. He returned with plenty of money and with (evidently) some secret source of wealth. He has never done a stroke of work since, and his expenses are by no means small. Probably Miss Lester makes him a handsome allowance until such time as she can give him her niece's fortune."

"But you haven't told us what secret he holds of hers," said Sir Charles.

The detective smiled.

"I believe Miss Peyton was an only child, and born some years after her parents' marriage—"

"Seven years. Her mother died six weeks after her birth."

"Just so, and Sir Douglas was too much engrossed with grief for his wife to care much about the child, much less to contemplate a second marriage. Am I right, Sir Charles?"

"Perfectly; but I can't in the least see what you are driving at."

"You see, sir, Mr. Carter gave me a few hints about the case in his letter, and I have studied them carefully. The scene would be this: a father shut up with his grief. A baby heiress left entirely in her aunt's charge. Aunt hates you, Sir Charles, and would guard babe jealously since only its fragile life stood between you and the property. Babe would naturally be ailing—motherless children are. In spite of all Miss Lester's care Dorothy Peyton died, and her aunt resolved at all risks to keep you out of the estate, procured another child whom she presented to her brother-in-law as his daughter."

There came a dead silence. The three men

were simply astounded at Wilmot's suggestion. They did not need to question him, they all felt instinctively he was right. His theory explained so much that had puzzled them. They only wondered they had never thought of it before.

"Do you suppose Sir Douglas knew of the fraud," asked Avenal, presently, "was it committed in his lifetime?"

"He never knew it," cried Sir Charles and the lawyer in one breath; then Mr. Carter added,—

"It was probably done when the infant was only a few months old. She was a very delicate child, and the air of Matching did not suit her. Miss Lester took her little niece to Brighton and stayed there with her for several months. Everyone praised her devotion to the little girl, when she brought back the heiress strong and blooming, instead of the sickly fretful baby who had left home."

"But it would be felony," said Sir Charles gravely. "And besides, she professed to love my brother dearly; how could she bring herself to deceive him?"

"Her hatred for you probably exceeded her attachment to your brother," said Mr. Carter drily; and then Jocelyn Avenal struck in, hurriedly,—

"I never thought of it before, but all accounts of Dolby agree in representing him as the son of a doctor practising near Brighton—depend upon it he inherited the secret from his father."

"Very likely," agreed the detective, "the doctor himself may have had no knowledge of fraud. Miss Lester may have posed to him as heartbroken at her niece's death, and begged him to find a baby she could adopt. There are always plenty of poor people thankful to spare a child. Depend upon it the doctor never knew the changeling was to be palmed off on Sir Douglas as his heiress; his son more crafty and worldly wise turned the secret to a pecuniary use."

Jocelyn Avenal started.

"Do you remember, Sir Charles, Miss Nairn told us that she had lived at Brighton as a child, and that it was at Brighton Mrs. March pretended to have seen her last. Do you understand now the extraordinary resemblance between those two poor girls?"

Sir Charles shook his head.

"Your brain moves too fast for me, Avenal, I can't follow you."

"I will put it more plainly. I believe firmly that Miss Nairn and the so-called Dorothy Peyton are sisters. Mrs. Nairn may have given up her child through dire poverty, or even have had the baby stolen during some illness of her own. My point is that she is the mother of the poor girl who has disappeared so strangely from Peyton Royal."

But Sir Charles was obstinate, and point-blank refused to see this argument. He declared that it was a cruel and unfounded charge to bring against Mrs. Nairn. Granted Janet Lester had stolen a baby and palmed her off as Dorothy Peyton she would have had to make shift with some orphan or child of lowly birth, not with the daughter of gentle folks who loved and cherished their children as did the Nairns.

"Hang it all," he cried angrily, "a man may be poor (I believe as a fact Nairn is as poor as a church mouse), but that doesn't mean he'll sell his own flesh and blood. Besides, remember that this must have been his first child. People may think their quiver too full when they have half-a-dozen olive branches, but they don't part so easily with Number One."

But though he point-blank refused to entertain the idea that Violet and Dorothy were sisters, on all other points Sir Charles was reasonable enough. He guaranteed the detective a hundred pound for current expenses, and promised a good round sum in his son's name if Wilmot's inquiries proved Dorothy to be an imposter. Meanwhile he declared, the poor girl ought to be sought for at once, for heiress or not it was clear to him she could not be happy in Miss Lester's charge, while if their fears were true, and she had escaped from Peyton Royal, she must now be a lonely little wanderer on the face of the earth.

"It's not her fault," said the old soldier generously, "that she has been made an usurper. If she's found and proved not to be Dorothy

Peyton after all, I shall still consider our family bound to provide for her, since she was stolen away from her own people by a connection of ours. My son Dick is a generous fellow, and I am sure he would settle a little income on her, while one girl more won't make any difference at the Hut, and my wife would give Dorothy a home until she found a husband."

"It would not be long," said Jocelyn with a smile. "Miss Dorothy has one of the sweetest faces I ever saw."

Sir Charles slept in London that night, and the following afternoon called again at the Princess Hotel. This time he was more fortunate. Miss Lester had arrived, and, on his name being taken up to her, signified her willingness to receive him.

Sir Charles had elected to make the visit alone, but he rather regretted it when Miss Lester received him courteously—indeed, almost warmly; she was one of those people whom he distrusted most when they seemed most affable. Privately he hoped she would not be too much for him.

"You are very kind to look us up," she said, frankly. "Perhaps, though, you have heard of my trouble and have come to condole with me?"

"I have heard nothing," stammered Sir Charles, "except that Dorothy is engaged to be married. As her uncle I think you might have sent me an intimation of the event."

"I was not thinking of her engagement, poor child," said Janet Lester, gravely, "but of her illness. She has never been strong, and the heat of this summer has been too much for her. I don't trust the doctor we have now at Matching at all. He is a very bad successor to your old friend, so I brought Dorothy to London on Monday to consult a physician."

"I hope he reassured you."

"He thinks her extremely delicate and ordered her sea air at once. I took her down to Hastings and left her in the care of some old friends. I had to come up to town to-day, for I have a good deal of business on my hands, but I hope to join Dorothy at the end of the week."

"And Mr. Dolby? Is he with his betrothed?"

"Hardly! I don't think Mrs. Grundy would quite approve of that. Lovel is staying in London, he is a journalist you know."

"It doesn't seem a very grand match for the heiress of the Peytons," remarked Sir Charles—"an unknown journalist!"

"Why, no; but then Dorothy believes in romance—like her uncle did years ago."

The home-thrust almost disarmed Sir Charles, he was no match for a very clever woman. He began to wonder whether they were not mistaking Janet wrongfully after all. Dorothy's distaste for Lovel Dolby might be only a girl's passing prejudice, Jocelyn Avenal and Mrs. Gibson might be injudicious partisans.

"Are you sure her heart is in it?" he asked Miss Lester, gravely. "Forgive me, but I have heard strange rumours against Mr. Dolby."

"People are always jealous of a successful man," she answered, "but if you are doubtful why not go down to Hastings yourself and ask Dorothy? I shall be returning there by the three o'clock express on Saturday, why not come with me? You can put up at the Queen's if it is too late for you to return home. I am rather proud of the result of my training, and I should like to present you to my niece."

"Our niece," corrected Sir Charles.

"I forgot you had a share in her. You see it is so long since we had anything in common."

And will it be believed that Sir Charles Peyton left her more than half won over; that he really believed he had been mistaken and that Carter and Jocelyn Avenal had made a mountain out of a molehill.

He actually had the hardihood to confess his change of opinion to them and to openly regret that Wilmot had received his instructions and—preliminary fee.

Mr. Carter was not in the least angry. He only smiled.

"She's hoodwinked you, Sir Charles. You'll be glad enough on Saturday evening that you put Wilmot on the track."

Jocelyn was even less encouraging.

"Do you believe, sir, that you'll actually see

Dorothy Peyton? Not a bit of it. Miss Lester has gained three clear days. Plenty of time for her to procure a fictitious niece, and instruct her in her rôle. I'll be bound now she didn't give you the address at Hastings so that you could call yourself."

"No, she didn't," admitted Sir Charles.

"And she didn't give you the name of the physician who ordered immediate sea air for her niece?"

"No; but—"

"In fact, Sir Charles, she got the better of you," said the lawyer drily, "and I'm not surprised. Miss Lester's a clever woman. If you'll forgive plain-speaking—a devilish clever one."

Sir Charles went home not at all pleased with his friends' incredulity. Jocelyn Avenal, who seemed quite to have neglected his artistic studies, started for Brighton.

"Wilmot's a keen man of business," he told Mr. Carter, "but I've been so mixed up with this case that I feel a personal interest in it. There must be someone left at Brighton who remembers Dr. Dolby; and, don't you see, if the heiress really died there, I might come on her grave!"

"I can give you the exact dates, if you like, when I got home," said Carter. "Sir Douglas never attended to business latterly, and I had to send a monthly cheque to Miss Lester all the time she was away. I can tell you when she left Peyton Royal and when she came back; besides, the address of the house where she stayed. I remember one thing which struck me at the time it wasn't nearly such a grand place as I should have expected her to choose."

"I shall be grateful if you will," declared Jocelyn; "and I'll wait in London till I hear from you."

"You shall hear to-morrow morning. You see I know the year, and it won't take long to hunt up the month."

Jocelyn was taking leave when a sudden thought struck him.

"You needn't tell Sir Charles what I'm after, I really think he fancies I'm a great deal too intrusive as it is. Didn't he change sides after seeing Miss Lester?"

Carter smiled.

"She's a very fascinating woman, Mr. Avenal."

"She didn't fascinate me when she hunted me out of her grounds like a thief."

Jocelyn received the lawyer's letter the following morning. It was very short and would have betrayed no secrets had it been read by the world at large.

"November eighteen seventy-two to April, seventy-three, 53, Templar-street, Brighton. Lodgings."

CHAPTER XX.

JOCELYN AVENAL knew Brighton well—most young men of means have visited London super—mer—but he had been there oftener than his fellows because, until quite lately, his father's only sister had had a home on the West front. Her husband had just gone out to take over a first-rate Colonial appointment, so Brighton knew the Garnets no more, to the great satisfaction of Jocelyn's grandfather, who, for some reason unknown, detested the gay Sussex watering-place.

"I've no objection to your aunt, who's as nice a woman as I know," he would remark when his grandson was starting on a visit to Mrs. Garnet, "but I detest Brighton, and if you pick up a wife there I'll cut you off with a shilling."

Well, now, it was probable Lord Dashleigh would fulfil the latter threat, though there was no chance of his being called on to welcome a bride from Brighton.

Jocelyn thought a good deal about the old man in the train, and wondered if he felt lonely in his big house in Mayfair.

Avenal loved his grandfather dearly, in spite of his fads, but he was a great deal too proud to sue for a reconciliation, lest the Earl should think he did so from interested motives, seeing the enormous fortune absolutely at the peer's own disposal.

It was the first day of October, a genial, autumnal afternoon; the season had barely begun, but already there were a good sprinkling of carriages in the King's-road, and the town had put on that brisk, cheerful aspect which tells of prosperity actual and to come—a golden harvest soon to be enjoyed.

Jocelyn was staying at the Bedford; long custom had made him prefer that end of the town. His own memory of Brighton hardly went back as far as seventy-two, but he knew that the West Pier was then in its palmiest days and that the glory of its eastern rival was already waning.

Certainly if Miss Lester had wished to be fashionable she would not have bestowed herself and her little charge in Templar-street, which Jocelyn found to be a short turning running from the Marine-parade inland, having houses on one side and a very high brick wall hiding the gardens of some private mansions on the other.

As Jocelyn Avenal walked up the rather depressing little street he was more and more surprised at Miss Lester's choice of a residence; it looked far more like a thoroughfare inhabited by residents of painfully-limited means, than one given over to lodging-letting.

There was nothing enterprising or brisk about it; it had not moved with the times, and probably looked now much as it had done when, nearly twenty years before, the baby-heiress arrived there.

A postman was crossing the road, and Avenal, who had a great belief in the intelligence of this class, asked him if there were another Templar-street in Brighton.

"Not as I ever heard of, sir. There's a Temple-street out towards the West-end."

"I suppose this is an old thoroughfare?"

"I've known it a matter of thirty years, sir," was the civil reply, "it's mostly very quiet and old-fashioned. Many of the houses have been in the same hands for years—widows and old maids, with very small incomes, the tenants are mostly. Now and again a newly-married couple'll try and start letting lodgings; but it never seems to answer. People complain the street's dull. I daresay I've known a dozen houses that started that game, but it's never paid."

Jocelyn slipped a shilling into his hand.

"I mustn't detain you any longer; but can you tell me just this. Who lives at No. 55?"

"Mrs. Chambers, sir. She's very poor, but quite the lady, a widow with grown-up daughters. She's been there a sight of years, the daughters were children when she came, and they're not to say so very young now."

Jocelyn almost wished that No. 55 had been occupied by some one desirous of letting lodgings, it would have been so much easier to call then. He surveyed the outside of the house carefully. The windows and blinds were spotlessly clean, the steps were white as hands could make them; but the curtains were of faded red damask.

There was a general depressed air about the whole place, and it would not have needed the postman's warning to tell Mr. Avenal the inhabitants were poor.

He knocked at the door, and the very smallest servant he had ever seen answered it.

"Can I see Mrs. Chambers?"

The little maid looked troubled.

"Be you the water-rate or the taxes, sir?" she asked in a confidential whisper; "for if you are I'm to say misis'll send a cheque shortly."

Avenal could have laughed at the pompous announcement but for a pang of pity for the gentle poverty hiding its head.

"I have not come about either," he said, kindly; "will you tell Mrs. Chambers that I am most anxious to ask her some questions about a former tenant of this house, and I shall esteem it a great favour if she will let me see her."

This message (though repeated with variations) was apparently effectual. The little maid returned and ushered him into the front parlour, a depressing room about twelve foot square.

Jocelyn began to think he had come on a foolish quest. He could not imagine Miss Lester inhabiting such a room.

Mrs. Chambers proved to be a thin sharp-featured lady of between fifty and sixty. Her

three daughters (Jocelyn decided) were all turned thirty.

The four ladies sat very bolt upright, and eyed the stranger with ill-concealed curiosity.

"My name is Avenal," he began quietly, "and I am here at the desire of my friend Sir Charles Peyton, who is very anxious to ascertain the whereabouts of a former tenant of this house."

The ladies relaxed visibly at the mention of Sir Charles; odd, thought Avenal, that a title should make so much impression.

"I am sure," said Mrs. Chambers, "we shall be most happy to oblige you. It is just eighteen years since I took this house. You may not remember, my dear, but Mrs. Lyle was most anxious to get it off her hands. She had the lease till Christmas."

Probably the youngest Miss Chambers had been twelve at the time of the move; but it suited their mother to assume her girls had been tiny children eighteen years before.

"Do you happen to know how long Mrs. Lyle had the house herself?"

"Three years, if she had stayed till Christmas."

"Ah!" Jocelyn gave a sigh of relief. "I fear I must trouble you with rather a long story; but I assure you it is of great importance to my friend."

The ladies were quite willing to be troubled in Sir Charles' interest and said so.

"Nearly twenty years ago, that is almost two years before you came here, Sir Charles' little niece was brought to this house for change of air. It was then"—he paused; he really felt afraid of offending them—"a lodging-house," said Mrs. Chambers. "Oh, yes, I know Mrs. Lyle let her rooms. One could hardly blame her, poor soul, considering her circumstances."

Dorothy Peyton, then a few months old, stayed here from November eighteen seventy-two till April of the following year. There is (I beg you will consider this a sacred confidence, ladies) a doubt in some minds as to what took place during this time. One person has been found bold enough to suggest that the real Dorothy Peyton died in this house, and the child taken away was a changeling."

"And there is property at stake."

"A great deal of property."

He did not like the hungry greedy look in their eyes; but then he had never tried to keep four grown-up people in semi-gentility on a hundred a year, if he had he might have been more merciful in his judgment of the ladies he now summed-up as "harpies."

There was a long pause, and Avenal said, gravely,—

"If any pecuniary recompense would be acceptable for the trouble I am giving you, madam, I am positive Sir Charles would wish me to offer it. If ten pounds—"

Mrs. Chambers would have thankfully accepted five. She smiled, positively smiled.

"One likes to feel one is not gratifying idle curiosity," she said, quietly, "and I knew Mrs. Lyle so well at one time, I should not like to gossip over her affairs needlessly."

A keen woman of business evidently. Jocelyn produced his purse, took out ten sovereigns, and placed them on the table. The very sight of the gold unloosed Mrs. Chambers's tongue.

"When my children were quite young—mere babies in fact—they had a very pretty nursery governess called Marjory Weston. She came of a good family, and was altogether above her position. My husband was living then, and we moved in very good society. I am sure I never dreamed of such a thing; but one of our visitors, the Honourable Captain Lyle, fell in love with Miss Weston, and they eloped."

"Was his name Rupert?" asked Jocelyn, eagerly, "and was he related to Lord Dashleigh?"

"His youngest son. Ah! Mr. Avenal in those days my lot was very different."

Jocelyn bowed.

"You are speaking of my uncle, madam. My mother, the Lady Diana Lyle was Lord Dashleigh's only daughter."

"How wonderful! Then Mrs. Lyle is your aunt!"

"I believe so. Pray continue your story, it has now quite a new interest for me."

She resumed, nothing loth.

"Lord Dashleigh was furious at the marriage, but it was little they cared. I never saw two people so happy. I don't believe they had a care till the captain was obliged to join his regiment in India. She could not go," here Mrs. Chambers looked unutterable things, "but she was to join him later on. He had taken this house before, and he left her here."

"As you are one of the family I daresay you know that he died on his way out. He had never notified his marriage to the authorities, and they did not know he left a widow. My husband declared if Marjory had sent in the proofs of the marriage she could have claimed a pension, but she would not send. She was a timid nervous creature, and she was frightened to death the Earl might demand the guardianship of her children. He had promised if the baby was a boy to make him his heir, but when he heard Mrs. Lyle had twin girls he washed his hands of her. She, poor soul, was haunted with the idea he might yet claim them, and so she never demanded a pension, and I am not sure now if she could have got one."

Neither was Jocelyn.

"She let lodgings and gave music lessons. We were staying at Brighton ourselves, and I was glad to let her have the girls as pupils since it all helped, and I was sorry for her."

"One day she came to me in great delight; she had let the whole house except the kitchen and one bedroom. The lodgers were very rich, and seemed not to mind what they paid. Marjory's own servant slept out, and so I suppose she managed somehow, though it must have been wretched having no sitting-room."

"Miss Lester was very kind to her and the baby's nurses—there were two at first—did many a little thing for the twins, so that altogether it was a very good thing for Marjory, and badly she needed help. In debt everywhere, and the landlord threatening the execution."

"My husband was taken very ill. We left the children at a friend's house and went up to London. I expected to be away a week, but I was gone three months, and when I came back it was as a widow."

"Almost the first person I saw after I began to receive my friends was Marjory Lyle, and she looked so fearfully ill I really thought at first that the worst had happened, and her home been broken up; but no, she assured me she was doing better; the rent was paid and the worst of the bills. The trouble was quite different, she had lost one of the twins."

"I own I was surprised. Violet was a delicate sickly child, but little Marjory had seemed the very flower of health. The mother would not speak of it even to me. She only said she prayed the little girl was better off. The lodgers left before the funeral. I think Miss Lester was afraid for her little niece, though I never heard before that convulsions were catching."

"After that my own fortune was much reduced, and I had to retrench in many ways. I had very little desire for visiting, and I hardly saw Mrs. Lyle; indeed, it seemed to me almost that she fought shy of me. She went on just as usual, but perhaps the lodgers paid more, or else one twin cost less to keep than two, for she never seemed to get into quite such straits again. Then one day I met her and told her I was going to move, and she asked if I would take her house. It was on her hands till Christmas, but she was anxious to leave at once. When I pressed for reasons she said she was going to be married. I opened my eyes, for it didn't seem so very long to me since the captain died; however, it was no business of mine. The wedding was to be early in September, because the bridegroom had a post as form master in a London school, and must enter on his new duties on September 15th. I came and looked over the house and finally agreed to take it. Mrs. Lyle was married on the 10th of September, and then the house was thoroughly done up, and we moved in. I have never heard of Mrs. Lyle since, but it is very odd you should have called to-day, because this morning a letter came for

her. Of course I have no clue to her abode, no must return it to the post-office."

"It is from my grandfather," said Jocelyn, when he had been permitted a glance at the envelope. "Mrs. Chambers, I am deeply obliged to you. Will you tell me this thing more? Did Mrs. Lyle grieve much for her baby girl?"

"She never seemed quite the same afterwards, and yet if you'll believe me, Mr. Avenal, she never went near the grave, and never attempted to put up a stone. I asked her once if she couldn't afford just a little cross, but she only said that grass and daisies were the best covering for a baby. Once when Violet was spending the day with us, I took her to see her little sister's grave, but Mrs. Lyle was very angry, and said she did not approve of children seeing sad sights, and that she intended Violet to forget she ever had a sister. I doubt if she ever told Mr. Nalson of her other child."

Jocelyn handed the lady the little pile of gold which she received with the air of one bestowing a favour, then with a sigh of relief at escaping from that dreary room he was about to take leave, when Mrs. Chambers said suddenly,—

"Dr. Dolby was Mrs. Lyle's medical attendant, and a close personal friend as well. He could have told you more than I have done, but he died about two years ago."

Out in the fresh October air Jocelyn felt as if he could breathe better. It was strange how quickly success had crowded his efforts, for to his mind there was now no shadow of doubt. The girl he had known as Dorothy Peyton was twin sister to the sweet-faced governess at the Hut, and both were his own first cousins. One might bear her stepfather's name, the other that of the heiress she had been stolen to represent; but in deed and truth they were Marjory and Violet Lyle, Lord Dashiell's grand children.

He had stumbled on a second secret while seeking the first. How strange that his grandfather had concealed his younger son's marriage even after the death of Viscount Lyle had made the little girls at Brighton people of importance.

"One thing's plain enough," thought Jocelyn, "he means to make one of the girls his heiress, vice myself disinherited. Well, I hope and trust his choice may fall on Dorothy, she'll want some compensation for the loss of Peyton Royal, and—I don't want Violet to be any richer than I am."

Which shows that Mr. Avenal's thoughts were running very much on the tender passion men call love, and that though he had escaped the perils of the heiress, he had succumbed to Violet's sweet brown eyes. Over his solitary desires, Jocelyn had a good deal to think about, but for the strange way in which his own family history was entwined with that of the reputed heiress, he would have carried his story straight to Sir Charles, but as it was, he thought the better plan would be to seek out his grandfather, still a very shrewd intelligent old gentleman, and hear his opinion of the story. Janet Lester had so far impressed Sir Charles that there was not much chance of his believing anything against her till after Saturday. When she failed with some specious excuse to keep her appointment with the baronet, he would change his mind.

Some men would have gone straight to Mrs. Nalson and questioned her, but of this course Jocelyn never thought. He could not bear to torture a woman who had already suffered so terribly, and what torture it would be if he told her of the strange mystery which shadowed her child's fate.

No, Lord Dashiell was the best person to appeal to. Fortunately the twins were still under age. It would be possible, Avenal thought, for him to claim the elder at Miss Lester's hands as his heiress. Anyway he would have more weight than anyone else.

To Jocelyn's mind the most important thing was to find Dorothy (he never thought of her by any other name) when once she was safe and free from Miss Lester's clutches, the rest would be easy enough. After all Janet Lester could not claim a sixpence of the Peyton property for herself. Dorothy, if once warned of the truth,

would only too gladly resign everything to the rightful owner—Dick.

"Dear old Dick," colloquised Avenal, "what a wonderful change for him to be master of that grand old place instead of physicing the rural poor of Aston. And his good luck has come to him early while he's time to enjoy it. Well, I must settle down myself and begin to paint pictures with a will if I am to prove to my grandfather that I can be independent of him and his thousands."

He began to read the paper aimlessly enough, but the sight of a familiar name startled him, and a strange fear clutched at his heart.

"We regret to hear that the Earl of Dashiell is lying dangerously ill at Dashiell Priory, his lordship's seat in Yorkshire."

"And I, fool that I was, left no address that would find me. Well, I must start at once, please Heaven, I shall be in time."

He was at Brighton station in time for a late train which landed him at Victoria about midnight. A time-table convinced him he could not continue his journey till the newspaper train started soon after five, so he drove to the Great Northern Hotel, and snatching a few hours of troubled sleep, was speeding on his way northwards, while most of the world still slept.

He did not know whether Lord Dashiell had destroyed the will which left him heir of all. He had no thought of himself at this juncture, but his heart was heavy with anxiety for the kind old grandfather, who, in spite of an irascible temper, had yet been very good to him, and for the two young girls whose future, it seemed to him, depended almost absolutely on Lord Dashiell.

"The letter I saw in Templar-street must have been delayed. No doubt he wrote it when he first felt the illness coming on him. Perhaps he sent for the twins, meaning to do them justice at last. Well, at least one of them can come to him if there is time. Lady Peyton would spare Violet."

To his infinite surprise a dog-cart was waiting for him at the station, and the groom's greeting was,—

"Thank Heaven, you have come, sir. The doctor telegraphed to your club yesterday morning, and I met all the evening trains."

"I only saw the paragraph in the paper, Andrew, and I started at once. How is my grandfather now?"

"Sinking fast, sir; but they do say he'll last just by main force of will until he's seen you again. He told the doctor he couldn't die until you came."

It was the fleetest horse in the Earl's stable, and it seemed almost to fly along the road, but seven miles divided Dashiell Priory from the station, and poor Jocelyn's patience was almost at an end when at last they passed through the lodge gates and drove up the chestnut avenue which led to the house.

One anxious glance at the old Gothic tower of the Priory, and Jocelyn sprang up the terrace steps. That glance had told him that his grandfather still lingered, for the flag which told of the owner's presence at his stately home still floated in the breeze. Alas! before night it would be flying half-mast high. An old servant was in the hall, but he attempted no greeting. Only in reply to Jocelyn's yearning eyes his lips formed the words,—

"Still alive."

On and on, up the broad oaken staircase, down the long corridor to the room sacred to the master of the house, then his heart aching with a strange, new fear, Jocelyn Avenal pushed open the door and went in.

Was he in time?

Only just. Feeble fingers already almost deathlike in their cold chill just touched his. A dying voice murmured,—

"Forgive!"

And then, with a look of ineffable love and tenderness on his face, the twelfth Earl of Dashiell was gathered to his fathers.

(To be continued.)

"SHE DIDN'T."

—301—

LIZZIE VAUGHAN was listening to the unceasing dispute between her two little sisters, wondering even while her lover was talking which would come true! Were they already disputing over her?

They were in the shrubbery evidently wrangling about some petty domestic matter, and chattering loudly and breathlessly, quite ignorant they were being overheard, and Lizzie stood by the gate, her eyes lowered, her hat swinging from her right hand, while Mr. Adolphus FitzSmart leaned on the gate-post, talking in low, eager tones.

They had been out on the river with an excursion party, and Mr. FitzSmart had urged his suit gently but persistently, and lingered at the gate in the silvery dusk for a few last words.

Mr. FitzSmart was small, thin-legged, weak-eyed, and slightly bald. Not exactly the man to win Lizzie Vaughan's heart; but had she been disposed to be confidential she could have informed you she had no heart to win now.

Mr. FitzSmart wore eye-glasses, dressed irreproachably, and possessed an immense fortune. He could give his wife a residence in Park-lane, a carriage and pair, diamonds and fine clothes enough to satisfy the vainest of women—and Lizzie Vaughan was tempted.

Why should she not take all this? It was offered her, urged upon her acceptance, and yet she hesitated.

She could not, on this day of all days in the year, speak the final word that should bind her for life. Memory kept sharply reminding her that one year ago this night she had parted from Dick Power; and so when Mr. FitzSmart pleaded for his answer then, she put him off.

"Come to-morrow. I will then be prepared to give you a final answer. Grant me one more day," she said, looking away from him.

"I will grant you anything that is for your happiness, though waiting is hard," he replied, with a sigh.

Poor little man! He was genuinely in love with this beautiful, queenly girl, and her hesitation was sorely trying to him.

It kept him in constant fear of losing her altogether. He drew a superb diamond ring from his pocket.

"Wear it as a sign that I may hope, my queen," he said, holding it out towards her with a pleading gesture.

She knew its value—knew that it but foreshadowed the splendours to come—but still something held her back from even making this concession.

"No, I would prefer not. To-morrow will be time enough," she said, decidedly, and shrunk from the proffered bribe with a blush.

He went away then, and she dropped her head down on the gate with a weary sigh.

Mr. FitzSmart, his love-making, and his money were put aside for a time. Once more she would indulge memory in reviewing that night one year ago, when she seemed so near the perfection of earthly happiness.

How far off, unattainable now! Well, let it be so. She would have her carriage and her diamonds; she would have everything—but love! Well, who would want love? Not she.

Thus she mused, defiantly, but all the same a miserable sigh escaped her bosom.

It all happened at Scarborough. She had gone there with a gay party from town, and by reason of her beauty and charming ways reigned there a sort of queen.

Among her admirers there were two who made no secret of their devotion—Dick Power and little Rex Walton.

Dick was a young naval officer, Rex a good-looking little dandy, who wore an eye-glass and talked with a lisp. He had money, though, and enjoyed the honour of being a great favourite with the ladies.

But Power! The girl drew a long, quivering breath as she thought of his fine face, handsome eyes, low, deep voice, and splendid stature. He

was a lover for a girl to be proud of, and he had loved her passionately, honestly.

She recalled it all—the dances they sat out in shady nooks on the hallway or in the hall, the promenades, the sails, and the hundred other ways they passed the time together.

If she had only refrained from any coquetry, had not encouraged Rex! But she could not deny herself the exquisite pleasure of making Power jealous, and then her own secret happiness intoxicated her.

"Whom the gods wish to destroy they first make mad."

She was mad not to deny the rumour of her engagement to little Rex when Power taxed her with it one day. She only threw back her lovely head, and laughed tantalizingly, leaving him with a jealous doubt tormenting him.

That night a party of them went out for a sail, and she had completed the wreck of her peace by giving all her attention to Rex's whispered conversation.

Power sat apart, his face rather pale and stern, but she had not thought but what it would be all right again.

Alas! that proved to be their last meeting, and she had been as reckless as though it had been naught to her.

It was a bright night, clear, and with moon light gleaming on the water. When they returned she stumbled slightly in stepping from the boat on to the beach, and someone caught her, for a moment, held her close, with a low, passionate whisper.

She thought it was Power, and turned, with a radiant smile, to thank him. With a shocked, disgusted thrill, she found it was Rex Walton, and in the same glance saw Power turn away and step out with a white, fixed face, and stride swiftly away towards the hotel, and that was her last glimpse of him.

The next morning she heard that he had gone away—returned to his ship—gone without a word, even a good-bye; and then she realized what it was to her. When poor little Rex Walton came with the offer of his heart and hand she refused him at once and decidedly.

The season had ended for her. She no longer cared for its pleasures. Oh, how she had suffered!

The months rolled away. She returned home, and then, when spring had come again, Mr. Fitz-Smart found his way to the riverside town where she lived.

He had admired her very much the summer before, but wisely kept in the background when younger, handsomer men surrounded her.

Now it was his time, and he did not fail to take advantage of it.

And Lizzie gradually came to the conclusion to take money and position in place of love. To-night she would think of the past; to-morrow she would put on Mr. Fitz-Smart's diamond ring, and set her face to the future.

"But shall I then be any happier?" she murmured, raising her eyes, and looking away across the wide, silent river.

This the end of all her girlish dreams—her high, noble thoughts of a worthily-spent life—to marry for money and position, to give her youth and beauty to a man she could not more than tolerate!

Turning, she slowly approached the house.

A servant met her at the hall door.

"I thought you never was a-comin', Miss Lizzie," she whispered, taking the girl's hat and gloves.

"Why, what do you want, Jane?" she asked, wearily.

"There's a gentleman in the dining-room been waiting a long time to see you."

"Who is he?"

"A stranger."

With a passing glance in the hall mirror, a hasty rearrangement of her hair, a touch to the flowers on her breast—Lizzie she had gathered that afternoon—she opened the door and entered.

The room was dimly lighted, and at first she did not recognize the tall, erect man who advanced to meet her.

Then her heart gave a violent bound, the

blood rushed to her face and receded again, and the breath came unevenly from her parted lips; for Dick Power, living in the flesh, stood before her.

"Forgive the intrusion, but I felt that I must see you again," he said, gravely, and not offering his hand.

"You are welcome," she replied, in forced, cold tones—pain and pleasure struggling for the mastery over her.

"I saw Rex only a few weeks ago, and learned what a mistake I made last summer."

"You could have learned it earlier had you desired to do so," she remarked, cruelly. "Did I tell you we were engaged?"

"No; but your manner misled me, and that night on the boat. How—how can a woman, gentle and kind in all other things, make a man suffer so?" he said, passionately.

She shuddered, and as he turned his face aside she saw how pale and haggard it was. Her lips trembled; tenderness filled her heart.

"Forgive me! I did not intend to hurt you deeply. I wanted to explain."

"They say you are engaged to Mr. Fitz-Smart. Is it true?"

"No, not yet; but I have promised him an answer to-morrow."

"Well, I wish you every blessing. No man will ever love you better than I have, Lizzie. Heaven bless you!"

Tears trembled on her lashes, fell, wetting the hollows on her breast.

"Oh, Dick! why did you leave me so abruptly last summer?"

"Because I was half mad with jealous rage, and because I believed you engaged to Walton. I have been ill lately—caught a miserable fever that has well-nigh sapped my life. I am going home—to die, the doctors say."

"Would you leave me to my fate a second time! Must I beg you to remain! Ah, Dick, how thin—how pale you are! You shall not die."

He caught her hands and drew her to him.

"Oh, Lizzie, my love—my life! Is it true you love me?"

"You might have known it a year ago to-night if you had asked me," she said, with a sob—the Fitz-Smart money and jewels utterly forgotten.

"You have put me off so many times—"

But the reproach ended in a passionate kiss.

"But what will you do for a mansion in Park-lane and its attendant state?" he asked anxiously.

She looked up at him; the light in her eyes enough to satisfy the most exacting of men.

"I shall not need them, desire them, now I have you."

Alas for Mr. Fitz-Smart's to-morrow! It would bring him nothing but disappointment.

The last thing that passed through Lizzie's mind as she fell asleep that night was a low, triumphant—

"She didn't!"

And Dick did not die.

UNTIL quite recently the dwarfs of the Andamans have not known how to make fire. On one of the islands of the archipelago is an active volcano, from which they were accustomed formerly to obtain fresh supplies of fire at intervals. Special expeditions for this purpose were not often necessary, inasmuch as they knew how to keep fire burning in decayed wood for an indefinite length of time. The people of a village, when leaving an encampment with the intention of returning in a few days, would take with them one or more smouldering logs. At the same time they would place a large burning log or faggot in a sheltered spot, where it would smoulder for a long while, so as to be easily rekindled when required. This method of keeping fire in decayed wood is still practiced commonly by the "Little Niggers." Nothing introduced by whites has ever excited their wonder so much as friction matches. To produce fire with such ease off-hand struck them as actually a supernatural accomplishment.

EVA'S LOVE.

—202—

CHAPTER XXIII.

WITH a quick awaying step Percy Railton passed down the street and went swiftly round the corner, feeling that he could not trust himself in that sweet presence, lest he break the bond of silence which she had imposed upon him, and as he did so a little gasping cry left the girl's lips, a little cry that came straight from that over-charged heart.

Kate felt the weight upon her arm grow heavier, heavier still, and then downward Eva slipped to the side-walk, her white face upturned to the merciless heavens.

A crowd had collected almost before Kate realized what had happened, and as she stood there wonderingly, not knowing in the least what she was to do, a man touched her upon the arm. Dazed, half-blinded, she looked about at him.

He stood behind an invalid's chair and motioned to the man in it, a young man with a haggard countenance, his face whiter than death itself.

"Lift her head up!" he exclaimed to Kate. "Toffee, tell that policeman to make the crowd stand back, and go and get a carriage quick! Any other time there would be a dozen about here, but this morning, of course, there are none. Don't be for ever getting through the crowd, man, but hurry! Stand back there, can't you?" he cried out, fretfully. "Can't you see that a lady has fainted and needs air?"

With almost sullen stupidity the crowd surged slightly backward, as a policeman made his way through it.

He seemed to recognise Jack Anstruther at once, for his hand went up involuntarily to his helmet.

"What's the matter, Mr. Anstruther?" he questioned.

"A lady has fainted, I think," answered Jack, his voice trembling in spite of him. "I have sent my man for a carriage to take her home, but the crowd is so thick that she can't get air. Push them back there, will you, officer, and lift her up further. Curse my helplessness!"

There was more bitterness in the tone than the words, and holding Eva up almost in a sitting posture, her lovely head leaned against his strong shoulder, the officer exclaimed,—

"Do you know her, Mr. Anstruther? Is the lady a friend of yours?"

"Yes," Jack replied. "Hang it all, why in thunder doesn't Toffee come! Ah, there he is now! My dear young lady, will you kindly tell me where Miss Brook lives?"

Dazed and stupid, Kate gave the address. With the aid of the policeman Toffee lifted Eva into the carriage, and Kate was about to follow, when it suddenly occurred to her that there was but sixpence left in Eva's pocket. She knew that would not pay for the carriage, and turned in humiliation to Anstruther. She would have died at another time before mentioning such a thing, before seeming to be a beggar, but what was she to do!

"You'd better let the officer call for an ambulance, sir," she exclaimed, mortified beyond measure, yet allowing her voice to ring out proud and cold. "Neither she nor I can pay for the carriage!"

Jack's face crimsoned.

"I beg of you not to speak of it," he cried, hoarsely. "I am a friend of Miss Brook, and all I have is at her service. Go on, please. I will be at the address almost as soon as you will. Driver, take care, and be sure you drive slowly."

Fortunately for poor Toffee the distance to the boarding-house was not great, for he could not push the invalid's chair fast enough upon that occasion to please his master, although usually it was exactly the reverse.

They arrived there almost at the same moment that the carriage stopped before the door.

Eva had still not recovered consciousness.

"The driver and Toffee will carry her up," ex-

claimed Jack, as Kate stepped from the carriage. "What floor?"

"Top floor, hall room," answered Kate, feeling the colour again rising to her cheeks. "We occupy it together."

"Top floor! Hall room!" gasped Jack. "Why didn't you tell me that before? Hold on a minute. Don't take her out yet. Driver, go to No.—, West Street. You will go with her and remain with her, will you not, madame? I know this lady very well indeed, and I can assure you that she will object to no authority that I take when she can speak for herself."

Unable to refuse, yet feeling that she was not doing right, Kate again took her place in the carriage, and once more poor Tofts was urged to a trot, although his master was a trifle less hard to please than he had been before.

"What has brought Eva to this?" Jack kept asking himself. "What induced her to leave us as she did? There is some mystery that I will have explained. I actually believe that she is—starving!"

A little shiver struck him at the bare suggestion of the horrible word, and he drew his rug more carefully across his knees.

Eva starving, and he with millions of money—he who would give his miserable life gladly for her!

He stopped on the way at the house of a physician whom he knew by reputation, and had Tofts leave a request that he would come at once, then went at once to the address he had given the driver.

The carriage was already there, and Kate had alighted, looking up and down the street anxiously when she saw him.

Tofts rang the bell, then took the invalid's chair up the steps more deftly than most persons could have managed it.

Kate still stood beside the carriage door.

"Good-morning, Annie," said Jack, to the maid who answered his summons. "Tell Mrs. Jaffrey that I wish to speak with her quickly. Don't let her delay for anything."

The maid disappeared at once, and immediately a tall, ladylike woman came into the hall.

"Why, good-morning, Mr. Anstruther," she began; but Jack interrupted her.

"There is a lady here, a friend of mine, Mrs. Jaffrey," he explained, hastily, "who has been taken very ill, and I have taken the liberty to bring her here to you. Will you let me have your parlour floor for her? I will explain everything to your entire satisfaction by-and-bye. I hope my word is sufficient to convince you that there is absolutely nothing wrong, but that she is a lady in every sense of the word."

"Why, certainly, Mr. Anstruther. Anything to oblige you."

She hurried away to have things in order, while Tofts descended the step again to assist the driver with his burden. The kindly man took Eva from the driver, however, and carried her up the steps and into the rear room, where Kate followed.

It was a large room, handsomely furnished, and Kate could scarcely repress a smile as she contrasted it with the one on the top floor of the boarding-house they had left so miserably that morning.

She suddenly remembered her own sensations at the sight of warm food the night before, and smiled again as she considered this new change.

But who was the man, the sight of whom had made Eva faint! She understood perfectly well who this invalid was. His name had told her that.

She and the servant, Annie, undressed Eva and put her to bed, Mrs. Jaffrey supplying a nightgown.

The doctor came as she was placed among the pillows, and while he examined his patient Kate went into the next room to speak to Jack, who hovered as near the door as he dared.

"How is she?" he questioned, eagerly.

"Just the same," answered Kate, still dazed, but recovering her equanimity somewhat. "She has not stirred."

"She must have suffered greatly!" stammered

Jack, endeavouring to conceal his emotion, but not succeeding.

Kate did not speak. The silence was maddening to the young man.

"Look here!" he exclaimed. "You are her friend, and it can't harm her in your estimation if I tell you the truth. I would give my life gladly for her, if the privilege were mine. I have never asked her to be my wife, and I never shall, because I know that would deprive me for ever of her friendship. I know I am only an unfortunate cripple, not even half a man, and I would never ask any woman to share my life, much less one I love as I do her. You see, I am not ashamed to own it to you, though I swear I will never speak of it to her. You must let me help her. There is nothing else that you can do now. She will—die otherwise, and I don't believe you would have that. There is one thing I believe you will tell me. How did she come to be in this—in this condition?"

And then all the indignation in Kate Hastings burst out. She forgot she was telling her friend's secret, and it is doubtful if she would have paused even if she had remembered.

"It was because of the cruelty of your sister!" she cried, hotly. "There! I suppose I shouldn't have told you that, but I couldn't keep silent after seeing her suffer as she has. She was turned from your doors in the night, without a penny, and without references by which she could get another position and earn her livelihood. She has walked the street night and day in a vain endeavour, until I have sometimes thought she would go mad under the strain of it. And it was all because of your sister. I heard that officer speak your name, and I knew at once who you were. What do you think a working-girl—any one who must earn her living—can do with an enemy like that against her? Once she humbled her pride and sent a woman there, hoping your sister's heart might be softened, but she received a telegram that very night that her services would not be required."

"Great Heaven!" whispered Jack. "You are sure of this?"

"Sure! Have I not seen her dying before my very eyes under the effects of it, and been powerless to aid her? This morning, as a last resort, because starvation was driving her to it, she was going to an artist to pose for him. I shall never forget her grief last night when she spoke to me of it. She said, 'I am going mad from the pains of hunger, and I can't take my own life! It is one of the two now!'"

Jack groaned aloud.

"I swear to you," he cried, passionately, "that neither my father nor I knew anything of this! We were told that Eva had left suddenly, without any message to a single member of the household. I felt sure that there must have been some cause for it all, and have searched the city over for her. I have even inserted personals in the papers without effect. I came to the conclusion at last that I had offended her by a conversation we had the evening before she left; that she did not wish to see me, and so gave it up in despair. But, thank God, I have found her at last! You see, you must see, that it is not alone my right, but my duty, to care for her now. I am rich. There is more, a hundred times more, than I know what to do with. It was through a member of—of my household that this misfortune befell her, and it is my solemn duty to take care that she suffers no longer. You realize that, do you not? Tell me that you see it as I do!"

There was such entreaty in his face and voice as Kate had never seen in a face before, and she sighed slightly as she replied,—

"I don't think that there is anything else for it than to accept it now. It is too late to send her to a charitable institution, and I am equally as unable to help her as she is to help herself."

"Thank you! thank you!" cried Jack, as if he had received a hearty permission. "And you will remain with her? You will not leave her without a woman friend?"

"I will remain as long as she needs me."

Jack was about to utter some word of gratitude, when Mrs. Jaffrey entered the room.

"Your little friend is recovering," she said to Kate. "Will you go to her?"

Kate bowed and started for the door, but before she had reached it Jack threw out his hand entreatingly.

"You will allow me to remain until you return!" he cried. "You will tell me how she is!"

"Yes," answered Kate, amused in spite of herself that he should beseech her in that way for permission to remain in a room for which he himself was paying.

She went in to Eva and knelt beside the bed as she saw the lovely eyes looking at her inquiringly.

"Are you better, dearie?" she asked, tenderly.

"Yes," answered Eva, faintly. "But what was the matter with me? And where am I?"

"In the Enchanted Palace!" laughed Kate.

"It's all like a dream, little one, but it's a wonderfully comfortable dream for all that."

"But where is it?" persisted Eva.

"In a very swaggy boarding-house, kept by Mrs. Jaffrey, as nearly as I can make out," returned Kate, drily, "and there is a fairy prince supplying it."

Eva lifted herself upon her elbow eagerly.

"Who is it?" she questioned, with excitement. "For Heaven's sake, tell me what he is like!"

"His name is Anstruther, and he is a cripple, but just the nicest fellow I ever saw in my life, and if you don't appreciate what he has done for you you are a wicked girl, Eva Brook!"

But the sweet, pale face had sunk back upon the pillow again, ghastly in its pallor, and there were no more anxious inquiries.

Kate went back to soothe Jack's fears after a time, and sent him away with the permission to come in the evening and ask after Eva.

An hour after he had gone she found a roll of notes upon the cabinet in the parlour.

Somehow it never occurred to her that it might belong to Mrs. Jaffrey. She seemed to understand intuitively who had placed them there, and why.

There were tears in her eyes as she put them carefully away.

CHAPTER XXIV.

LATE in the afternoon Jack was again taken to the house of Mrs. Jaffrey, and was admitted by that lady herself.

"Your little friend has so far recovered that she is reclining on the sofa," she told him. "Do you wish to see her?"

"If she will permit me," answered Jack, unable to prevent the warm colour from rising to his brow. "Will you ask her?"

Mrs. Jaffrey looked at him with a bright smile that could not quite conceal a little pity.

"Poor, foolish boy!" she murmured as she left him. "A most unfortunate case of the moth and the candle. It may be that she will marry him for his money. Heaven knows there would be some excuse for her in her but too evident financial straits. But they would be bitterly unhappy together afterward. I hope they won't make that mistake for both their sakes, and yet—I don't know that I would advise her against it, if she were to ask me my opinion—which of course she won't."

She had knocked gently upon the door, and Kate answered the summons.

"May I see your little friend for a moment?" Mrs. Jaffrey asked, kindly; and Kate pushed back the door.

Eva was lying upon a couch. She wore a crimson gown, a loose *nyctige* affair which Mrs. Jaffrey had provided. It lent a touch of colour to her pale cheeks, and Mrs. Jaffrey smiled down at her admiringly.

"A very anxious friend is waiting outside to know how you are," she said, gently. "What shall I tell him? If it were that he might see you for just a minute it would make him absurdly happy."

"You mean—" stammered Eva.

"Poor Jack Anstruther, yes. He is such a

good fellow, is Jack, that I can't bear to leave him disappointed."

She was unaware that she was pleading his cause, she who had spoken against it to herself only a moment ago, but she was surprised at the sudden accession of colour in Eva's cheeks. Mrs. Jaffrey continued hurriedly, scarcely realising what she was talking about,

"I knew that boy before his father married his present wife, or had his fortune left him, and a more heroic little martyr never lived than he. Some day I will tell you why I love Jack, Miss Brook, but at present he is waiting in the hall while my tongue runs. Will you see him?"

Eva was smiling up at her now, with that sweetness of expression that few had ever been able to resist.

"Yes," she said, gently. "I should be very glad to see him."

And Toffie pushed the chair in.

"Toffie, you may go down to the dining-room and see Mary for half an hour," Mrs. Jaffrey exclaimed, knowing that she could not have given Toffie a greater treat. "When your master wants you, he will ring."

Smiling with delight, Toffie obeyed.

"I am coming in to see you before you go," she continued, briskly, to Jack. "You know we boarding-house keepers"—with a little wry face—"have such quantities of things to look after that we have not much time for gossip, and there are dozens of questions I want to ask. You must promise not to go until I see you."

And poor Jack too willingly promised.

"I do hope she won't be tempted to marry him!" the inconsistent woman murmured as she left the room. "But then he is so in love with her, and she certainly does need his money dreadfully. Heigh-ho! Poor children!"

Kate herself pushed Jack's chair nearer to Eva's couch. She watched him as he touched the small thin hand almost reverently, and tears came to her eyes.

"I've got a confession to make to you, Eva!" she exclaimed, huskily. "I was very much upset about you this morning, and in my distress I told Mr. Anstruther something of which I am very much afraid you will not approve. Not that I care very much whether you do or not—with something of a return of her old whimsical manner. "In my hurry I gave the whole thing away. I told him of his sister's cruel treatment of you, and what the result had been. Now that I have done all the damage I can, I'm going to leave you for awhile, as there is something I must attend to. Mr. Anstruther, no matter how furious she may be with you for tempting me to betray her, don't you leave her until my return. Remember I trust her to your care. The doctor said she was not to attempt to leave the sofa, and was to take that liquid every hour."

And not giving either of them time to reply to what she had said she whisked out of the room, making no explanation of where she was going, nor why. But Jack was not ungrateful for that.

He leaned forward, and looked into the sweet eyes, unconscious of how much he was betraying of his emotion.

"Eva," he said, tenderly, "in my heart I reproached you for breaking your word to me. You promised that you would never go without my permission; but I learned to-day that it was through no fault of yours, but the cursed cruelty of my step-mother and her daughter. Yet you could have trusted me, dear heart. You surely did not doubt me!"

"Ah, Kate could not tell you all, because she did not know!" cried Eva, earnestly. "Your very kindness to me now is placing me in the greatest peril. She told me—your sister Olga, I mean—that she would betray me if I allowed you to see me. She has discovered the secret concerning my mother, and she threatened to advertise that fact to the world if I did not go at once without seeing you or ever speaking to you again. She threatened me in every way. It would be useless to try to conceal anything from you now. It is too late for that, after what Kate has told you. She will keep her word, Jack. You should have let me be. You should not have come.

You will bring her vengeance down upon me."

"Do you think I am not capable of coping with a wicked woman?" he questioned, hotly. "She has threatened you, and in a tender point, so that you have yielded through fear. She knows your vulnerable point; she realizes the shame you feel, and with scandalous cruelty she has worked upon it. But she shall do so no longer. I shall defy her!"

"You must not do that!" cried Eva, lifting herself upon her elbow, and looking at him earnestly. "Listen to me, Jack: Since I saw you last I have suffered—Heaven knows I could never tell you how much. For days together there has been nothing to eat, either for me or that brave girl who has been more than friend to me."

"And a member of my family brought that upon you!"

"Wait! I have walked in search of work until I have worn the shoes from my feet, and almost the soul out of my body, always with the same weary, heart-sicken result—no work without references! I couldn't beg, Jack; that was out of the question. And I couldn't face an angry Heaven with a life which I myself had put out. I dared not. It has been little short of perdition, dear friend, but I realize that Heaven sent it upon me. Wait. Don't interrupt me. It has shown me what one suffered before me—my mother! She had a little child crying for bread, an old mother, suffering in a silence that broke her heart. She could not get food for either, and in her despair—what did she do, Jack? Heaven knows, I don't. She became an artist's model. Anything worse? I am going to discover. It may be wicked lies that the world has told of her. Who knows? I am going to discover. I have set myself a task, Jack, and only Heaven can prevent my carrying it to the end. Innocent or guilty, I am going to know the truth of my mother's life, and then, when I have discovered that I have doubted a martyr, I am going to crawl to her on my hands and knees, and beg for her forgiveness. I sinned in judging her without knowing her temptation, and I will know the truth!"

"I will help you!" exclaimed the young man, fervently.

"Only with silent encouragement," cried Eva, earnestly. "I cannot risk your sister's vengeance now. There must be no word spoken against my mother, let the cost be to me what it may. A man offered me a position as a model. I am going to accept it. I am going to earn the money to redeem her in the eyes of the world, even as she earned it to save the life of her cruel, heartless little child."

"Eva," cried Jack, "you won't do that! Dear, why should you? It is my right, my duty, to help you. It will be my chief delight. I swear to you that no word shall ever be spoken against your mother by Olga! I know a way to stop her, and I will use it. Eva, promise me."

"I cannot!" she gasped. "It is the atonement that I have set myself."

"Then sit for me!" exclaimed Jack, eagerly. "I am an artist. Why should you refuse me what you grant to another of perhaps even less merit than I possess? Child, you have a face which any artist would give half his life to reproduce on canvas. Why should you deny to me that which you would grant a stranger? Eva, sit for me!"

"But your sister!" she cried, with a shiver. "Will you not trust me? I promise you that she shall speak no word that will hurt you. Eva, think! Would you put it out of my power to right a wrong that one of my family has done? And would you give a stranger the privilege you would deny to me?"

"But he gave me food when I was starving. He took me in and offered me assistance when the door of the whole world was closed in my face, and the password was one I could not give—references! He asked for nothing. He trusted me. He gave me this opening for a future which seemed desolate enough, and—I promised him."

"But if he should release you of his own accord!"

"He will not. He seemed most anxious."

"But if he should——"

Eva smiled wearily.

"Then I will grant what you wish on the terms that no word shall be breathed against my mother."

Almost at the same moment Kate Hastings entered the Alpine. She asked for Mark Ramsey, and was taken to his studio.

He was sitting before his easel as she entered, and looked up curiously.

"I have come to make a strange request of you," she stammered, hesitatingly. "You had an engagement with a young lady to-day to sit for you as a model. She could not keep her appointment with you because she was taken very ill as she would have entered this building this morning. She says that she intends to come to-morrow; but I want you to promise me that if she does you will not accept her as a model. You will decline to allow her to sit. Will you do it?"

Mark Ramsey put aside his mahlstick and palette, laid his cigar upon a table, and turning around in his chair, looked at her curiously.

CHAPTER XXV.

PERHAPS Percy Ralston had never undertaken to perform a harder task than the one he set himself when he passed Eva upon the street, simply raising his hat to indicate that he had recognized her, but never attempting to break the silence which she had commanded.

Under the excitement of the moment he bore it, but as soon as she had vanished from sight it seemed to unman him. He could do nothing that day but think of her, see nothing but that thin, sad, white face, and his own grew haggard as he remembered.

"If ever there was suffering depleted in any countenance it was in hers," he told himself, miserably. "I must know what it means. This is simply maddening. I shall break my word if I look into that face again. I am not quite sure that I acted wisely in not doing it this time. How ill and ghastly she looked! Not like the little country flower that I loved so well, and yet I love it, faded as it is, a thousand times better. Oh, Eva! Eva! If we had both died up there before this hideous separation came to us would it not have been better?"

He endeavoured to set his mind upon the task which he had expected would occupy him that morning, but Eva's face came between him and it until he could bear it no longer, and in sheer desperation at last he went to seek Miss Anstruther.

She came down at once with both hands extended, welcoming him warmly, but started somewhat as she observed the unusual pallor of his countenance.

"What is it?" she asked, even before he had released her hands. "You look distressed. I hope nothing unfortunate has occurred."

"Yes," he exclaimed, huskily. "I have seen—Eva."

For just a moment her own face became paler than his. A sudden dizziness seized her. The room grew dark and whirled before her sight, and then she recovered herself.

Would he be holding her hands like that, with that pleading expression in his handsome eyes if Eva had told him?

She sat down before she replied; then braving her own fears she lifted her eyes to his reproachfully.

"And you disobeyed her command?" she questioned. "You broke your word to me!"

"No!" he cried, passionately. "I kept it, and it has broken my heart! Miss Anstruther—Olga, when did you see Eva?"

"Yesterday afternoon," she stammered.

"Then you must have observed the horrible change in her," continued Percy, breathlessly. "Her face was lined as if twenty years had passed over her since I saw her last. She has lost all that warm, bright colour that made her beautiful. She looked haggard, and wan, and old. Her eyes were sunken, and about the mouth was

a curious line that I never saw in a young face before. If I did not know it to be impossible I should say she must be—starving!

Olga started so violently that she dropped a fan she held, but Percy was too much excited to observe it.

"I saw a face like that once," he continued, rapidly. "It was in the streets of Paris during the Commune. It was the face of a little child that looked like a haggard woman. She came up to me and put out her little thin hand, almost like the claw of a bird. She opened her mouth to ask for food, and as she did so, fell forward into my arms—dead! She had starved to death. I have been trying to remember all day who it was that Eva reminded me of. It was that child. Good Heaven, Miss Anstruther! I—Oh, but I realize that I am speaking like a madman! My very words are an insult to you and your generosity. Forgive me, but the suffering in that face has completely unnerved me."

Olga was holding very firmly to the arms of her chair. She had sunk her teeth hard into her white lips, but had been unable to draw any colour there.

She trembled under the violence of her self-repression. She uttered a little discordant laugh, which was hushed curiously almost before it had lived.

"It isn't—true!" she exclaimed, hoarsely. "It is—ridiculous, of course; but—but I didn't intend to tell you. Why should I, and distress you uselessly! She has been ill—very ill—that is all. She is up and out again now, and will be her old self in no time. But there is—something I—I have to tell you. Do you think you can bear it?"

She had quite recovered herself by the time she reached the end of her speech. It was no longer the hoarse, rasping tones of a half-hysterical woman, but the insidious purring of a "queen of hearts."

Percy's countenance changed again. He sat down opposite her and leaned forward, looking into her eyes miserably.

"I can bear anything," he answered, hopelessly—"anything! What is it?"

"I am afraid to tell you," she exclaimed, rising and laying her hand upon his shoulder as she leaned over him. "I am afraid to trust your strength, and yet sooner or later you must know. And who could tell you so well as I—I who—Oh, Heaven! in my sympathy, I betray my own humiliating secret, you will forgive me, Percy, will you not? You will forget it!"

"Go on," he whispered, heavily, not really understanding her.

"Then listen."

She was standing a trifle behind him, her hands pressing heavily upon his shoulders. She leaned forward until her breath lifted the hair from his forehead. Her lips were almost touching his brow.

She hesitated a moment before continuing, then whispered:

"Forgive me if I hurt you. Remember that I had rather have a knife thrust through my own heart than give you a moment's pain. That poor child sees her duty in a different quarter from what you see it. She thinks that she has wronged you by making you care for her, and that the punishment of her mother's sin is visited upon her. She sees—or thinks she does—that her duty to you is for her to—Heaven help you, Percy! wed another man, and—she has promised!"

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Percy, staggering to his feet. "I must go to her at once! I cannot, will not bear it. I—"

"You are too late!" exclaimed Miss Anstruther, her voice plaintive and tearful. "Too late! I would spare you if I could, but I cannot—dare not! This wedding has already taken place—at noon to-day!"

He flung out his hand like a blind man, and caught at the mantel-shelf to keep himself from falling.

He stood there never speaking—never moving until the silence grew ghastly, but he seemed not to feel it.

Olga crept up to him and touched him, half-frightened at what she had done. The contact

seemed to bring him to himself in some sort, for a heavy shiver passed over him. He passed his hand wearily across his eyes, and then murmured, as if he were stifling,—

"There must be some mistake! There must be—"

But she broke in upon the words that she knew were not meant for her. She had risked everything, and she knew that her whole future depended upon the moments that followed.

"It is useless to hope!" she cried, passionately. "I was there myself. I tried to dissuade her, but she would listen to nothing! She leaves the city this afternoon, she said—for ever! I tried—"

"You should have told me!" cried Percy, hoarsely. "You should have let me go to her."

"Perhaps I should!" panted the woman who stood before him. "Perhaps that would have been the wisest way, but—Great Heaven! have I not done all I could! Have I not yielded up everything in life to the girl who was robbing me of the only thing on earth I valued! You may say it was never mine. Heaven help me, it never was! You spoke of my poor brother once. You said, 'My lot is happier than his, for at least she loved me once!' And here is happier than mine, for at least—you loved her once. Oh, Percy, for the love of Heaven, go, and don't listen to me! I realize that I am eternally condemning myself in your eyes, but I have borne all I can! Because I am not beautiful does not look out the woman from my heart. It does not prevent me from loving as other women do, only that mine is pitifully hopeless. I have never loved before, and all the wild yearning of a starving heart has gone out to you. I tried to save her for you, but she would not let me. Was I more or less than human that I did not come to you with this story, and so shut myself out from you for ever! Was I more or less than human, that some little lurking joy would shoot through my poor, lonely heart! Oh, Percy, forgive me! Forgive me, dear! I know that I have made myself a thing not worthy of even your pity; but I loved you so! I loved you so!"

She sunk down upon her knees at his feet, allowing her arms to fall over her upraised knee, her face upon them. She was a picture of the most abject misery, and would have done credit to the *Théâtre Français* training as an actress. Percy stood there looking down upon her, dumb with astonishment, his nerveless hands hanging at his side.

He was a chivalrous man, suddenly robbed of the one thing that made life beautiful to him, and this was a woman—a woman kneeling at his feet, not beseeching his love, but begging his forgiveness for it.

He was too much stunned for a moment to move, then he stooped forward and lifted her very gently.

His consternation blinded him for the moment to his own agony.

Olga was sobbing hysterically. Instead of allowing him to place her in a chair, as he intended doing, she leaned against his breast heavily, so heavily that he was obliged to support her with his arms.

"My dear child," he said, soothingly, "don't sob like that. Don't, I beg of you. You have said nothing that is not an honour to me, nothing for which I do not thank you from the very bottom of my heart. If I had anything under Heaven that was worth asking you to accept in recompense for this great love you have wasted upon me believe me I should be a happier man; but an empty heart would be an insult to you."

"And yet I would accept it gratefully, humbly, Percy," she exclaimed, her voice so hoarse as to be discordant. "Ah, some day I should win some return, and until then I would wait so patiently. Only let me be your slave—anything, that I may be near you. Percy, do you despise me so that you cannot listen to my prayer! Have I made myself hateful to you? Dear, the fault is yours for encouraging me to speak farther. Percy—Percy! say something to me, for my heart is breaking!"

"What is there I can say, Olga?"

"Only that you will let me be near you. Only

that I may sometimes touch your hand, look into your dear eyes. Your life is as empty as my own. At least let us comfort each other. Only mine is the more pitiful, dear—a thousand times the more pitiful!"

"Poor little girl!"

She had not removed herself from his arms. On the contrary, she leaned more closely against him, and as he spoke the soothing words she lifted one arm and allowed it to creep around his neck.

"Percy, kiss me—just once—only once!" she pleaded.

Why should he not? It was only a crumb she craved. Why should he deny it to her!

He would have touched her with his lips, but she held him, held him by the very strength of her arms.

He lifted his head, cool, impassive as before, but—Ralph Anstruther and his wife stood in the door of the drawing room.

(To be continued.)

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FACETIÆ.

A WOMAN with a number seven hand struggling with a number five glove.

THE thief's favourite metals—Steel and then Iron.

WHO says it is unhealthy to sleep in feathers? Look at the spring-chicken, and see how tough he is.

CAN the bashful young man who blushes violently whenever he performs polite offices for the ladies be called the pink of courtesy?

AN actress may remain sixteen years old for a good while, but when her children begin to get married she has to own up to twenty-nine.

"WHAT a time you've been about that egg, Mary!" "Yes, ma'am; but the new kitchen clock has such large minutes!"

CARE will kill a cat, says the proverb. We think the proverb lies. The world is full of care, but the cats still hang on.

FOND FRANK: "I say, my dear, don't you worship the very ground I walk on?" MAUDE: "Oh, I should if you only owned it."

PODMORE: "Are you on speaking terms with old Mrs. Chinwork?" DOBSON: "No; only a listening acquaintance."

WIGGLE (in love): "Why, man, her very feet are a poem!" GIGGLES (a cynical friend): "No doubt; but isn't a poem of only two feet rather short?"

WARRINGTON: "Why do you think you will have any trouble in keeping the engagement secret?" PENDENNIS: "I had to tell the girl, didn't I?"

BROWN: "Ever see such a quarrelsome character as Smith?" JONES: "Never. I think he'd provoke even a professional pugilist into a fight."

"WHAT is that long piece of writing, papa? Is it poetry?" PAPA (hastily replacing it in his empty pocket-book): "Y-yes, dear; it is an owed to your mother's dreammaker."

WHEN a certain bachelor was married the members of the Bachelor Club broke him up by sending him as a wedding present a copy of "Paradise Lost."

A COURTEOUS old clergyman being told a tough story, said:—"Since you were an eye-witness, I suppose I must believe you, but I don't think I'd have believed it if I had seen it myself."

"Yes, doctor; it still hurts me to breathe—in fact the only trouble now seems to be with my breath." "Oh, well, I'll give you something that will soon stop that."

"THERE'S the proof of my new photograph," said GRIM. "What do you think of it?" "Don't care for it," said GRIM. "Doesn't look like you; you've tried to look pleasant."

"EXCUSE me, sir," said BARKER to a boorish traveller, "but what is your business?" "I am a gentleman, sir. That's my business." "Ah," said BARKER, "I see. You are taking a vacation."

MISS SHILLIGURL (sobbing): "I think it's awful mean. That horrid Jones girl has been saying that I paint." MISS MEANNESS: "Never mind, dear. I expect if she had your complexion she would paint, too."

MODEST YOUTH: "I have only £700 a year, sir; but I think I can support your daughter on that." FATHER (enthusiastically): "Support her, my dear boy! Why, you will be able to support the entire family on it."

"AND did you see Monte Carlo while you were at Nice?" he asked. "No," she returned, "papa called on him, I believe; but from his disappointed appearance when he returned to the hotel I think Mr. Carlo must have been out."

WILHELM: "I tell you, it's better in the end to be honest. Did you ever know a rogue who wasn't unhappy?" SHALLEY: "No; but, then, one would hardly expect a rogue to be happy when he is known. It's the rogues who are not known that are happy."

THEY had been discussing the pronunciation of "oleomargarine," and finally agreed to leave it to the waiter, but he hedged. "Sure," said he, "I have to pronounce it 'butter,' or lose my job."

COOK (on the day after her arrival): "Please, ma'am, I'm a bit fiery at times, and when I'm fiery I'm apt to be a bit rough spoken; but you needn't let that put you about—with a little present you can allus bring me round again."

MAJOR: "Colonel, how much champagne can you stow away in a single evening?" Colonel: "It all depends, my boy." Major: "On your capacity?" Colonel: "No; the other fellow's capacity—for paying for it."

"DIDN'T you always say that McJones was so shy that he would never propose?" "Yes, that's what I said." "Well, he's engaged to be married." "I know it; but that does not prove that I was wrong about his not proposing. He is engaged to a widow, and this is leap year."

"WHY do you always invite Pitanehard to your house?" "He is an old friend." "That's no reason. He is horribly ugly, and he gives me the nightmare." "Yes, but he amuses the children so much, and it's much cheaper than a magic lantern!"

"DON'T you sometimes make a mistake, and lynch the wrong man?" asked the travelling Briton. "We did once," replied the Tennessee farmer; "but we offered to do the square thing by the widdier." "How was that?" "We told her she could take the pick of the crowd for her second husband."

SMITHSON: "I hear your last novel has already appeared in its sixth edition. How did you become so phenomenally popular?" BROWNSON: "Very simple; I put a 'personal' in the papers saying that I was looking for a wife who is something like the heroine of my novel. Within two days the first edition was sold out."

MOTHER: "I spoke to your husband about his habit of reading the paper at breakfast, and I think that what I said will cure him. Was he reading it again this morning?" Married Daughter: "Really, ma, I never noticed him at all. You know I had a long letter from my friend in India."

TRAMP (to fussy old gentleman): "Will you please give me a penny, sir! I'm starving." Fussy Old Gentleman (producing a coin): "Dear me, starving! Can you change half-a-crown?" Tramp: "Yes, sir." Fussy Old Gentleman (pocketing the change): "Dear, dear, starving. Bless me, but this world is full of misery."

AN Irish lawyer having addressed the court as "gentlemen" instead of "yer honours," after he had concluded a brother of the bar reminded him of his error. He immediately arose and apologized thus, "May it please the court, in the heat of debate I called your honours gentlemen. I made a mistake, your honours." The speaker then sat down.

LITTLE Betty was at her first evening entertainment, where everybody was strange to her. She grew home-sick, and, with tears in her eyes, begged her hostess to send her home. As she was starting, a smile shone through her tears, and she said,—"Good bye, Miss Smith! Mamma told me to be sure and tell you I had enjoyed myself."

MRS. GUFF: "What might be the matter, Mrs. McDuff?" Sure and ye look mighty puzzled." Mrs. McDuff: "And I am that, Mrs. Guff; I want to buy a quarter of a pound of tay and a new glass butter dish, and by this and by that I don't know whether to buy my tay at the shop where they give away the butter dishes, or to purchase my butter dish at the place where they give away the tay."

HOTEL CLERK: "There is a newspaper-man who has been stopping with us during the week, and he has just called for his bill. If we are liberal with him, perhaps he will give us a good notice." LANDLORD: "A capital idea! Tell him there will be no charge." Clerk: "Yes, sir." LANDLORD (calling clerk back): "Anybody with him?" Clerk: "Yes, sir, his wife." LANDLORD: "All right; charge her double rates."

THE following anecdote was a well-known one in the Bluecoat School in the writer's time, and will bear repetition. The headmaster of the writing school was explaining buying and selling to the class, and the following questions and answers passed between the master and head boy, who, by the bye, was rather sharp. Master: "Jones, imagine I'm a tripe merchant and you are a buyer. Go outside and come in again and ask for some tripe." Exit Jones. Jones (re-entering): "Please, sir, I want some tripe." "Where's your money?" "Where's your tripe?"

THE temperance apostle was walking along the sidewalk, serene in the consciousness of his own goodness, when a well-dressed man stopped him and shook his hand. "Guess you don't remember me," said the well-dressed man. "Why—ah—" "Three years ago I attended one of your meetings, and heard you draw a graphic picture of the able mechanic whose children went ragged while the children of the saloon keeper, with whom he spent his wages, were dressed in silks. The story fitted my case to a T." "And you reformed!" "Should say I did reform. Went into the saloon business myself."

HE was smoking a full flavoured Havana when he met his friend. "Have a cigar!" he inquired, very politely. "Thanks," said the other, gratefully, taking and lighting the proffered weed. After a few experimental puffs, however, the friend removed the cigar from his lips, and looking at it doubtfully, said, with a very evident abatement of gratitude in his tone: "What did you pay for these cigars?" "Two for a shilling," replied the original proprietor of both weeds, taking his own cigar out of his mouth, and looking at it with considerable satisfaction; "this cost me tenpence, and that twopence." The conversation flagged at this point.

THE late Dean Stanley is said to have rarely made a gesture while preaching, a fact which probably gave rise to the following amusing anecdote:—"One day, after morning service, he asked his wife if she had noticed the intensity with which the congregation had gazed upon him during the sermon. 'How could they help it, my dear,' said Lady Augusta, 'when one of your gloves was on the top of your head the whole time!' The dean, having taken off his hat before entering the pulpit, the glove lying therein had fallen on his head, and, as he stood quite still while preaching, there it remained throughout the entire service, unknown to himself."

SOME years ago a man was arrested, and sentenced to three months' hard labour, on the charge of stealing a bottle of medicine that he had been asked to call for by a doctor for one of his patients, the man being a messenger and carrier from the town to the village in which the patient lived. Some months after the man was brought up again on a similar charge, and when in the dock was asked by the magistrate if he had anything to say in his defence. "Yes, your honour," replied the man. "I was asked by the doctor to call again for another man's medicine, and this bottle stood on the doctor's desk, labelled: 'To be taken as before.'" Needless to say, the man was discharged amid roars of laughter.

THREE travellers happened to be sitting drinking in a wayside inn on the road to London. Being representatives of the three leading countries in the Kingdom the conversation naturally turned to the prowess of the different countrymen. Said the Englishman: "We have a man in my country that can stand a ladder in the centre of a field, and climb to the top of it without a support." "Oh, ay," said Sandy, the Scot; "but we have a chiel in my country that will climb up the same ladder, and when he gets to the top he turns round and gangs down the fither side, held first." "Och, shure now, and that's nothing at all," says Pat; "we have a bhoy over in the ould country that can climb up the same ladder, and when he gets to the top he hangs on to the clouds wi his teeth, and draws the ladder up after him."

SOCIETY.

THE Royal Family will put off their mourning for Prince Henry of Battenberg on the day of Princess Maud's wedding.

THE Queen has granted the use of Albert Cottage, Osborne to Prince and Princess Henry of Prussia, who are coming to England early in July.

THE Prince and Princess of Wales and the Princesses Victoria and Maud will spend most of their Sundays during the season with the Duke and Duchess of Fife at Upper Sheen House, East Sheen.

THE Prince and Princess of Wales are to spend the Whitsuntide holidays at Sandringham. The Prince goes to Hatfield on a visit to Lord and Lady Salisbury on Thursday, July 30th, and next day he will visit the exhibition of the Bath and West of England Agricultural Society at St. Albans.

THE Emperor of Russia has intimated his intention of conferring the Order of St. Andrew upon the Duke of Connaught during his visit to Moscow, while the Duchess is to receive the Order of St. Katherine. Among the insignia of the Order of St. Andrew is a star, which the Czar always presents in brilliants.

THE Crown Prince of Germany is appointed to a Lieutenancy in the 7th Regiment of Hussars, of which his august father is Honorary Colonel, while Prince Eitel Fritz is attached to the infantry regiment bearing in perpetuity his great grandpère's name.

ARRANGEMENTS for Princess Maud's wedding are fast approaching completion, although they may be elaborated or changed in some degree later. The date chosen will almost certainly be the 8th or 9th of July, and the ceremony will be at the Chapel Royal, St. James's Palace.

THE Duke and Duchess of York are to be the guests of Lord and Lady Feversham at Duncombe Park, near Helmsley, during their visit to Yorkshire in July. The Duke and Duchess will arrive at Duncombe on Monday, the 20th, and are to visit the Yorkshire Agricultural Society's Show at York on the Tuesday. They will return to London on Thursday, the 23rd, stopping a few hours at Halifax on their way up.

ONE of the dresses now being made by a Court dressmaker for Princess Maud of Wales has the skirt in a circular gored shape, arranged with three gores, which make up as four, lined throughout, and interlined with stiffening half way. The bodice has a basque cut in continuation with the upper bodice sections, these including the front, back, and two side pieces. Behind these, the basque forms ripples below the waist, while in front it sits plainly, being cut out in a front on either side of the waist to show a folded belt or sash at the waist. The collar forms a point on either side of the neck.

THE Princess of Wales has, with her unfailing tact and kindness, decided that orders for the *trousseau* of Princess Maud are to be distributed among several firms who have had the honour of working for her Royal Highness. The *trousseau*, as in the case of her Royal Highness Princess Louise of Wales, will be prepared in London; with the exception of the usual orders from Dublin and Edinburgh, since it is the wish of the Princess of Wales that the capitals of the united Empire should all have a share in the preparations for so auspicious an event, nor indeed will gallant little Wales be forgotten.

PRINCESS MAUD OF WALES is having two charming-looking tea-jackets made in brocaded silk, beautifully trimmed with lace and silk. They have a fitted lining terminating at the waist, over which the fulness is arranged, gathered in from the neck and shoulder-seams. A square-shaped collar, cut on the double of the material, and edged with lace, trims the shoulders, and a turn-down collar, shaped on double of material, which finishes the neck. The sleeve is one cut, very deep, so as to allow of the fabric being turned under to form a frilled cuff, which is finished with a twist of satin ribbon with a bow. Pretty loop bows of satin ribbon ornament the shoulders, and a ribbon girdle completes the waist.

STATISTICS.

ENGLAND has 85 per cent. of the wealth of the United Kingdom.

IF an express train, moving at the rate of forty-five miles an hour, were to stop suddenly it would give the passengers a shock equal to that of falling a height of fifty-four feet.

THE oldest London theatres are—Drury Lane Theatre, opened 1663; Sadler's Wells, started as an orchestral assembly room in 1683; Haymarket, 1720; Covent Garden, 1732; and Lyceum, 1795.

A CENSUS of the gipsies in Hungary has been taken. They number 274,940, about half settlers in towns and villages, while the other half keep up a nomadic life. Of the total number 82,045 can only speak the Tsigany or Romany language; 104,750 speak Hungarian, too, as their mother tongue; 67,046 Roumanian, 9,877 Slovak, 5,861 Serbian, 2,396 German, and 2,908 Ruthenian.

GEMS.

How few there are who had rather be hurt by the truth than tickled by flattery.

At the beginning of the eak and at the end take thy fill, but be saving in the middle, for at the bottom saving comes too late.

If we hope for what we are not likely to possess, we act and think in vain, and make life a greater dream and shadow than it really is.

A GOOD CONSCIENCE is better than two witnesses—it will consume your grief as the sun dissolves ice. It is a spring when you are thirsty, a staff when you are weary, a screen when the sun burns you, a pillow in death.

To meet with success something more than a small effort, or a series of small efforts, is necessary. It is not by short, fitful jerks but by long, vigorous pulls that a boat is forced against the current. The oarsman stretches himself to his work, puts all his momentum into it, does not rest upon his oars long enough to be carried back by the current, but perseveres—and in this way only can he reach his goal. It is just the same in life—the long, strong pull conquers all opposing forces.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

ALMOND JUMBLES.—One pound of sugar, one half-pound of butter, one pound of almonds, blanched and chopped fine, two eggs, flour enough to mix stiff. Roll thin. Moisten the top of each one with the white of an egg and sprinkle with sugar. Bake quickly.

POTATO PANCAKES.—Boil six medium-sized potatoes in salted water until thoroughly cooked. Wash them and set aside to cool. Then add three well-beaten eggs, a quart of milk, and flour enough to make a pancake batter. Bake quickly on a well-greased griddle, and serve very hot.

BONED CHICKEN.—Boil a chicken thoroughly, remove the skin and fat carefully, and chop fine. Soak in a cup of cold water half a box of gelatine for an hour, and add the juice of the chicken boiled down to a pint. Mix this with the chopped chicken, seasoning with salt and pepper, and put in a mould to cool.

ORANGE SNOWBALLS.—Boil some rice for ten minutes; drain and let it cool. Pare some oranges, taking off all the thick white skin; spread the rice in as many portions as there are oranges on some pudding or dumpling cloths; tie the fruit (surrounded with the rice) separately in these and boil the balls for an hour. Turn them carefully on a dish, sprinkle well with sifted sugar. Serve with any kind of sauce or sweetened cream.

MISCELLANEOUS.

It is now customary to copper-face the bottoms of iron ships by the galvanic process, as a protection against decay.

THE Yellow River of China has changed its course twenty-two times during the present century. Its mouth is now 300 miles distant from the place it was 100 years ago.

THE common people among ancient Egyptians had wooden sandals. If we may credit the assertion of historians, one of the Egyptian queens received the revenue of one city solely to keep herself in sandals.

It is claimed that the perfume of flowers disappears as soon as the starch in the petals is exhausted; and it may, it is said, be restored by placing the flower in a solution of sugar, when the formation of starch and the emission of fragrance will be at once resumed.

HERONS sometimes choke themselves by attempting to swallow a large trout. An eider-duck has been killed by attempting to swallow a toad. A kingfisher was once found which could not fly on account of having a young pike stuck in its throat. When the fish was removed the bird flew away unhurt.

THERE is one emerald in the Sultan's collection which is said to be as large as a hen's egg; and there are enough watches which are set with pearls and diamonds to fill a large portmanteau. There is a golden cradle, covered with precious stones, in which the children of seven different Sultans are said to have slept.

THE powder used in big guns is queer-looking stuff. Each grain is a hexagonal prism, an inch wide and two-thirds of an inch thick, with a hole bored through the middle of it. In appearance it resembles a piece of wood. If you put a lighted match to it it will take seven or eight seconds to go off.

IN Japan the flowers of chrysanthemums constitute a popular dish. During the months of November and December bunches of them, washed and carefully displayed, may be seen in the stores of all the dealers in vegetables. Almost all the varieties are edible, strictly speaking, but those to which preference is usually given have deep yellow flower-heads.

THE little town of Nasso, in Sweden, has a feminine department, 150 strong, in its fire brigade. The waterworks of the village consist simply of four great tubs, and it is the duty of the women "firemen" to keep these full in case of fire. They stand in two continuous lines from the tubs to the lake, about three streets away, one line passing the full buckets, and the other sending them back.

THE silent cab-call is an invention which is now being tried with considerable success in many London clubs and hotels. Two lamps, one red and the other green, are suspended from the door of a club or hotel. The porter within has merely to press a knob in the entrance hall, and either the red or the green lamp may be illuminated the one to call a four-wheeler, and the other a hansom.

ALL fish breathe by taking in water, which is, to a certain extent, impregnated with air, and expelling it through the gills. These blood-red organs are so admirably constructed for the purpose they are intended for that they extract the oxygen from the water during its momentary contact with them. Fish that live for some time out of water have cavities in their head which are filled with that liquid, and which can be utilised for dampening the gill at any time.

ACCORDING to a well-known astronomer, every year the weight of the earth is augmented by the falling on its surface of metallic iron in very fine powder, and this iron, which comes to us from shooting stars, falls almost continually, sometimes alone, and sometimes mixed with rain or snow. In all now be found iron in appreciable quantities, and in a state of fine subdivision. He has in this way procured material enough to form a small charm, which he wears attached to his watch-chain.

NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

H. B. P.—It must be paid.
ALICE—There would be no breach of etiquette.
MAGGIE—You would have to prove your marriage.
REGULAR READER—The holiday is a trade affair, not fixed by statute at all.
ALFRED—Very little chance; only those with high qualifications are engaged.

A. O.—The figure of Britannia first appeared on the copper coins in the reign of Charles II.

F. E.—Perhaps the Emigrants' Information Office, Broadway, Westminster, could supply you.

R. P.—We are not aware of any better way of dealing with supercilious hairs than plucking them out.

ELLEN—Dye your curtains; the preparations requisite to take out mildew would destroy the fabric.

T. E. B.—Dictionaries are put before the public as authorities, and should be followed after they are acknowledged as such.

REGENT—Address him at House of Lords, Westminster, a W., where it will reach him as long as he remains in the United Kingdom.

TOM—At this season of the year animals are often affected like your pet. Increase the doses of sulphur, and discontinue meat diet.

M. D.—There is no necessity for any show of feeling on your part; what is necessary is that the practitioner should get at the whole facts of the case.

RON—You may indeed find some one willing to give more for the coins as curiosities, but we cannot say where, and it would not pay you to search for him.

JACK'S ONLY LOVE—From £80 to £40 is nothing out of the way. The value is reckoned by the depth of the black colour, studded with silver hairs, and the richness of the fur.

TED—You must be of suitable age and give references, and also have a certain amount of education. Your best way will be to make an application, when you will be informed of what is required of you.

PAMEY—Of course, if you know from the first that you are not able to go, it would be advisable to respond at once. A house always likes to know how many guests she is to provide for and whom to expect.

E. W.—The Bank of England was established in 1694. It was projected by William Paterson, a Scotchman, and its chief objects were to supply the deficiency of money and the necessities of Government.

EMMA—An individual giving a false character of a servant is exposed to an action if any ill consequences occur from such conduct. No master or mistress is obliged to give a character to a discharged domestic.

R. E. B.—A donjon means the principal tower of a castle; it was usually raised on a natural or artificial mound, and situated in the innermost court. Its lower part was commonly used as a prison. It was sometimes called the donjon keep or tower.

LILLIAN—By applying to any large dealer in surgical instruments, or probably to an optician, you could secure the desired information. Your address will be given to a specialist in diseases of the ear, who may be able to send you some valuable information.

KATE—If you have known her for a long time and are on good terms with her family and the friendship seems to warrant it, there can be no serious objection. You will, however, do better to make a point in favour of conservatism rather than being too presuming.

FRED—We cannot advise anyone to seek his fortune in Africa without having something more than newspaper reports upon which to build his hopes or expectations. The climate in the region you propose going is not healthy, and the cost of passage there considerable.

O. S. W.—In a good hot oven on a stoneware platter melt a large lump of butter. When thoroughly softened shake it all over the dish in order to grease it well. On this hot butter drop six fresh eggs as if for poaching. When the whites are set they are done. Serve with long and narrow pieces of toast without crust, which will act as a garnish for the edge of the dish.

J. F.—Coat the tools with a thin layer of wax or tallow by first warming the steel and rubbing on the wax warm until it flows, and then let it cool. When hard, mark the name through the wax with a graver, and apply weak nitric acid. After a few moments wash off the acid, and wipe with a soft rag, when the letters will be found etched into the steel.

GERTRUDE—The celebrated riddle of the Sphinx in classic story was this: "What animal walks on four legs in the morning, on two at noon, and on three in the evening?" The answer is: "Man, who in infancy, or the morning of life, walks or creeps on his hands and feet; at the noon of life he walks erect; and in the evening of his days, or in old age, supports his infirmities on a staff."

INQUISITIVE—The Oxford hood of the M.A. is black, lined with red; the St. Andrew's hood is the same. The Cambridge M.A. hood black, lined with white; the Aberdeen and Edinburgh hoods are the same. The Dublin M.A. hood is black, lined with dark blue; the Queen's University is the same. The Durham M.A. hood is black, lined with purple. The London M.A. hood is black, lined with russet. The Glasgow M.A. hood is black, lined with bell heather red.

M. B.—We presume the boy was born of foreign parents, in which case he must have resided in England for five years prior to the granting of the certificate of naturalisation, the cost of which is £6. Your application should be addressed to the Secretary of State, Home Office, Whitehall, London.

E. M.—To make sherbet take of ground white sugar half pound, tartaric acid and carbonate of soda of each a quarter of a pound, essence of lemon forty drops. All the powders should be well dried; add the essence to the sugar, then the other powders; stir all together. Mix by passing through a hair sieve. The total cost of the above quantities is about 1s. 2d.

NINA—Scatter some clean sifted white or silver sand over the floor. Dissolve one pound of potash or pearl-ash in one pint of water, and with this solution sprinkle over the sand. Then get a pail of very hot water and scrub the boards lengthwise, using a hard brush and soap. Change the water frequently, the potash will help you to take out the stains.

M. E.—Veto is a Latin word signifying "I forbid." The sovereign of England has theoretically a veto upon the measures of Parliament, but it is a power which has not been used since 1707. In France, at the beginning of the French Revolution, the National Assembly in framing the constitution allowed the king only a conditional veto; but an absolute veto was restored to the monarchy after the fall of Napoleon.

L. E. W.—Vinegar, half a gallon; dry lampblack, half a pound; sifted iron rust, three pounds. Mix thoroughly, let it stand for a week, then heat it, and lay on three coats, not allowing each to dry before the next is put on, finally rub with linseed oil. But as you do not say what you want the stained article for, or of what quality it is, we cannot tell whether this will suit your purpose.

PURITY DICK—Your canary is affected with brucellosis, brought on possibly by his egg being hung in a draught or in a room where a good deal of gas is burned; an authority directs that in such cases the bird should get, perhaps, two or three drops of oxyd of squilla (from a chemist) three or four times daily, that he should be kept in a comfortably warm room, and if very weak have one drop of whisky or brandy mixed with his squilla.

HERE AND THERE.

Here, the anguish and the pain,
 There, sweet peace and rest we gain;
 Here, the heartache and the sin,
 There, the golden crown we win;
 Here, the waves beat high and wide,
 There, no roar of troubled tide;
 Here, the hand, the lip, the red,
 There, we see 'twas all from God;
 Here, we suffer, weep and pray,
 There, God wipes each tear away;
 Here, with friends we're called to part,
 There, we meet them heart to heart;
 Here, deceit and treachery cold,
 There, we walk the streets of gold;
 Here, our hearts with anguish riven,
 There eternal rest in heaven.

STAGE-STRAKE—It is impossible to teach a girl to be an actress who has not had the instinct born in her; she may be taught to recite as young ladies do at school, and pose fairly well; but acting, and especially acting in a manner to command the admiration of intelligent people, requires intellect, and no master can put that into the head of either girl or lad; we advise you to stick to the business which has hitherto occupied your time.

L. S.—It is quite a matter of constitution and habit whether coffee agrees with anyone or not. Some persons can take it to whom tea is almost poison, and many cannot touch it at all without suffering afterwards. It is dangerous to get into the habit of drinking it to excess, it is as bad as an alcoholic stimulant. Coffee is generally considered wholesome at breakfast and after dinner; what anyone can take best is right is always a thing to be found out; some people sleep better after a good meal, others require something exceedingly light for supper. It is always bad to go to bed on an empty stomach.

FOLL—Mistaking the ball of your thumb occasionally proceed with it to rub up the old varnish, working at a small space at a time; in this way remove all the varnish, but stop rubbing as soon as ever you reach the paint; to rub it would ruin the picture. Before commencing the rubbing you may wash the surface all over with cold soap and water, rinsing the soap off with clean water; then rubbing dry, and commence the rubbing. Of course the picture must be removed from the frame. Having removed the old varnish, which may be a work of days, let it stand a day, then re-varnish with mastic.

N. C.—When wall paper is soiled by any but a grease spot, which always comes through, it is enough to put over it a piece of paper, kept for the purpose. But this paper, which has been preserved rolled up in a dark closet, will have faded much less than that upon the wall; it is, therefore, necessary to expose it to sunlight until it becomes of the same general tone. If the pattern is a simple one it will be to follow its outlines in cutting the new piece. In all cases the edges of the piece to be applied should be scraped down with sand-paper, so that the outline of the patch shall not show too plainly. Wall holes can be covered in this manner, so that the repair shall be quite invisible.

O. H.—One of the simplest ways to cook bananas is to remove the skins from six, cut in halves, lengthwise, and arrange on a platter. Mix one tablespoonful of butter, melted with three tablespoonfuls of sugar, and the juice of one lemon. Baste the bananas with this several times, and bake for twenty minutes, setting the dish on the centre grate.

INQUISITIVE—Ants' eggs are considered a choice dish in some countries. They are spread upon a slice of bread-and-butter, and sauces considered excellent are made with them. They are esteemed as a costly food in Siam, within the reach only of well-to-do people. They are the object of an important trade in some countries of northern Africa, where they are cooked in boiling water, and yield a kind of vinegar or formic acid.

VENE—We should certainly advise you to study shorthand if you wish to make your way as a copyist and type writer. It is not so difficult as it is tedious, and the only way to attain anything like proficiency is to make sure as you go on that you can read every word you have written. Many persons learn to write readily enough; the grand difficulty comes afterwards, when they want to read as quickly as they have written.

DISTRESSED—The way to cure yourself of blushing is to make such arrangements as will prevent you from being taken unawares anywhere; sit down and methodically arrange what you will do and say in the event of being in certain places and meeting certain people during the day; then when meetings take place you will have cut and dried before your mind what you are to do, and need not blush in your effort to think out something that ought to be done.

FLUE—There are many good disinfectants. Each physician has his favourites. Different kinds are required for different purposes. Some will stain clothing, while others are harsh and disagreeable for personal use. Cheap and efficacious ones are: Copperas, one and a half pounds to a gallon of water. Sulphate of zinc, two ounces, and the same quantity of common salt to a gallon of water. Boracic acid, two ounces to a gallon of water.

LIBERTY—The following account is given by an authority on traditions and legends: "The Goddess of Liberty, in Mount Aventine, was represented as holding in her hand a cap, the symbol of liberty. In France, the Jacobins wore a red cap. In England, a blue cap with a white border is the symbol of liberty; and Britannia is sometimes represented as holding a cap on the point of a spear. These symbols were all taken from the Romans. When a slave was manumitted by them, a small red cloth cap called pilleus was placed upon his head, and, as soon as done, he was termed *Libertinus* (a freedman), and his name was registered in the city tribes. When Saturninus, in the year 208, took possession of the Capital, he hoisted a cap on the top of his spear to indicate that all slaves who joined his forces and marched under his standard should be free. When Marius incited the slaves to take up arms against Sylla he employed the same symbol; and when Caesar was assassinated, the conspirators marched forth in a body, with a cap elevated on a spear in token of liberty."

A. B. C.—Apply to the horse an ointment made of equal portions of sulphur, turpentine, and train oil. Rub it well, but gently, on the part affected, with the naked hand, or with a piece of flannel. It is stated that more good will be done by a little of the ointment being well rubbed in, than by a great deal being smeared over the part. The rubbing should be repeated. On every fifth or sixth day the ointment should be washed off with warm soap and water. The food of the horse in the interim should be nourishing but not stimulating. If the weather permits, the animal should be turned out as often as convenient. After the cure has been effected, the blanket and harness of the horse should be cleaned with a solution of chloride of lime and water; also the curry comb. The brush should be burned. The rack and manger and partitions, and every part of the stable which the horse could possibly have touched, should be well washed with a hard-broom saturated with chloride of lime and water—a pint of lime and three gallons of water. The most common cause of mange is contagion. If it once gets into a stable, it spreads through it. Mange, it is said, has been communicated from the dog to the horse, but not from the horse to the dog. Be this as it may, it is asserted, with great positiveness, that among the diseases to which the horse is exposed, there is not one more highly contagious than the mange.

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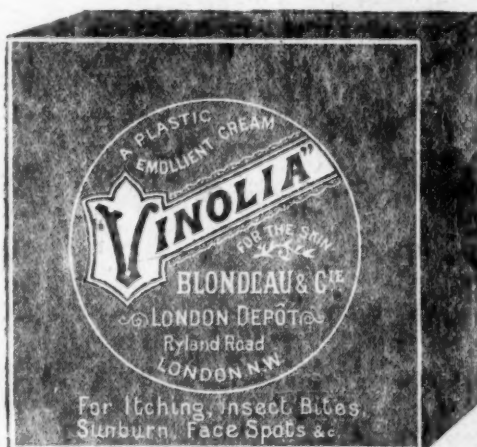
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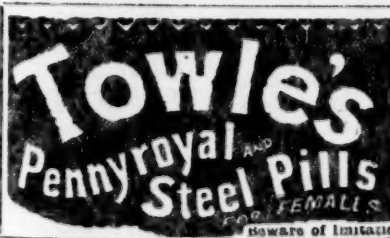
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PART 420. VOL. LXVII.—JULY, 1896.

CONTENTS.

SERIAL STORIES.

	PAGE
EVA'S LOVE	136, 180, 186, 209
MADLINE GRANT	129, 153, 177, 200
POOR LITTLE DOROTHY	133, 157
THE HEIRESS OF WYNDCLIFF	171, 205

NOVELETTES.

FALSELY ACCUSED	181
GWENDOLINE'S MISTAKE	145, 174
LADY BARBARA	121
LOVE THE CONQUEROR	193

VARIETIES.

	PAGE
POETRY	143, 167, 191, 215
FACETIAE	141, 165, 189, 213
SOCIETY	142, 166, 190, 214
STATISTICS	142, 166, 190, 214
GENS	142, 166, 190, 214
HOUSEHOLD TREASURES	142, 166, 190, 214
MISCELLANEOUS	142, 166, 190, 214
NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS	143, 167, 191, 215

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